



FINAL Environmental Assessment

Bethel Recreation Facility

115 Pleasant St, Bethel, VT

DR 4022 VT

November 22, 2014



FEMA

Department of Homeland Security
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Region 1
99 High Street
Boston, MA 02110

Prepared by:

Marcus Tate
Historic Preservation Specialist
FEMA Region 1, Mitigation Division
Environmental & Historic Preservation Office (EHP)
99 High St., 6th floor
Boston, MA 02110

This document was edited by:

Lydia A. Kachadoorian, RPA
Acting Regional Environmental Officer (Acting REO)
FEMA Region I, Mitigation Division
Environmental & Historic Preservation Office (EHP)
99 High St., 6th Floor
Boston, MA 02110

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
Bethel Recreation Facility**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Disaster Background and Overview.....	1
1.2	Purpose and Need.....	1
2	ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED	3
2.1	The No Action Alternative.....	3
2.2	The Proposed Alternative.....	3
2.3	Other Alternatives Considered and Eliminated.....	3
3	AFFECTED ENVIRONMENTS AND POTENTIAL IMPACTS CONSIDERED	5
3.1	Geology	8
3.2	Soils.....	8
3.3	Air Quality.....	9
3.4	Climate Change	10
3.5	Water Quality	10
3.6	Floodplains.....	11
3.7	Wetlands.....	11
3.8	Threatened and Endangered Species.....	12
3.9	Ecosystems, Fish and Wildlife.....	12
3.10	Historic and Cultural Properties.....	12
3.11	Environmental Justice	15
3.12	Noise.....	15
3.13	Traffic Impacts	16
3.14	Public Health and Safety	16
3.15	Cumulative Effects.....	17
4	PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT	18
4.1	Public Meetings/OUTREACH.....	18
4.2	FEMA Publication of Draft Environmental Assessment Notice and Request for Comment	18
6	REFERENCES	21

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3-1	Project Alternatives: Summary of Potential Effect, Coordination and Mitigation Applied
-----------	--

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A Maps and Figures

Figure A-1	Site Location Map
Figure A-2	Topo Map
Figure A-3	Floodplain Insurance Rate Map
Figure A-4	Wetlands Map
Figure A-5	USFWS Federally Listed Species
Figure A-6	VT ANR Natural Resource Atlas Map
Figure A-7	Area of Potential Effect Map
Figure A-8	1926 Topo Map

Appendix B Photographs Site Photographs

Appendix C Permits and Other Supporting Documents

C-1	Bethel Recreation Facility 2013 Master Plan
C-2	FEMA's March 28, 2014 FEMA ARA Recommendation
C-3	Email Correspondences between FEMA and SHPO
C-4	Archaeological Resource Assessment from Hartgen
C-5	Final Consultation with FEMA and SHPO

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACM	Asbestos Containing Material
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ARA	Archaeological Resource Assessment
APCD	Vermont Air Pollution Control Division
BGS	Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services
BMP	Best Management Practice
CAA	Clean Air Act
CATEX	Categorical Exclusion from NEPA analysis
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
C.F.R.	Code of Federal Regulations
CMS	Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Reimbursement
CWA	Clean Water Act
DHP	Vermont Division for Historic Preservation
DEMHS	Vermont Division of Emergency Management & Homeland Security
DMH	Vermont Department of Mental Health
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EO	Executive Order
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
GIS	Geographic Information System
JCAHO	Joint Committee on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
MSA	Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NESHAPS	National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollution
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NPL	National Priority List
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
PA	Public Assistance
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USEPA	U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
USGBC	U.S. Green Building Council
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services
VTANR	Vermont Agency of Natural Resources
VTDEC	Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Town of Bethel, Vermont has applied through the VT Division of Emergency Management & Homeland Security (DEMHS) to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for funding assistance. In accordance with 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for FEMA, Subpart B, Agency Implementing Procedures, Part 10.9, this Environmental Assessment (EA) is being prepared pursuant to Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as implemented by the regulations promulgated by the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ); 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508. The purpose of the EA is to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the proposed alternatives, and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

1.1 DISASTER BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

During the incident period of August 27 through September 2, 2011 Tropical Storm Irene brought torrential rains and flooding throughout the town of Bethel, VT. The flood the waters of Locust Creek rose to a high level causing damage to the Old Route 12 Bridge (Town Hwy # 79 - class 3 non federal aid road). The flood waters severely undermined both abutments causing them to shift and break apart, resulting in the collapse of the abutments and deck. Neither abutment nor the deck is salvageable.

The Town of Bethel (Applicant) has determined that repairing the Old Route 12 Bridge B49 is not in the best interest of the community and has decided to apply Alternate Project funding to two capital improvement projects. The Old Route 12 Bridge 49 has been formally discontinued by the town and the approaches have been secured to prevent vehicular and pedestrian access.

Project #1, which is not the subject of this Environmental Assessment (EA), will not be reviewed in this document because it is categorically excluded under NEPA. It consists of the following: removal and disposal of existing Bridge B49 (including footings, stem walls, deck and railing), shaping stream banks in accordance with Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (VTANR) recommendations, constructing turnarounds on either side of the bridge within existing right-of way, and grading the approach of Old Route 12 at the southerly intersection with VT State Route 12 to provide a more elevated and level "stop zone" at the intersection.

Project #2, which is the subject of this EA, will be analyzed in this document. It consists of the following: Bethel Recreation Facility improvements, such as the renovation and expansion of the pool house with accessible walkways and parking area, and the installation of an updated playground structure and surface. Further details are explained in various sections of this document.

1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the Proposed Alternative is to improve the conditions of the popular swimming pool which is the focal point of the Recreation Facility. Red Cross approved swimming lessons are provided for the regional youth. There are concerns regarding the bath house and its inadequacy due to deterioration from age. The Bethel Recreation Facility serves the community, but has not had any improvements in many years.

Tropical Storm Irene has exacerbated already deteriorated conditions, such as cracked pavement and tennis courts, poor drainage conditions, water damage to buildings and mildew. The site and building

do not comply with current regulations on universal accessibility according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Furthermore, elements of the buildings mechanical and electrical systems do not meet current code requirements.

While temporary provisions have been made to address accessibility, these improvements do not meet contemporary standards. Examples of the lack of accessibility include; the absence of a ramp from the pool house to the pool, the hill slope leading to the pool house being greater than 1:20 and with no handrail, and the lack of accessible toilet stalls.

2 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

2.1 THE NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the No Action Alternative the Bethel Recreation Facility would remain in its existing condition in need of repair and renovation. If this alternative is selected, there would be no change in this facility.

2.2 THE PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE

The current layout does not allow for staff to have visibility over the entire facility and the parking areas and recreation areas have no boundaries creating safety concerns. The facility is also undersized for the current demands. A new facility would be beneficial for the surrounding community and serve as a beacon for public cohesiveness.

In March 2013, Vermont Integrated Architecture, P.C. was contracted by the Town of Bethel to develop the "Bethel Recreation Facility Master Plan". This plan developed three (3) proposals for redevelopment, Option A, B, and C. The proposed alternative described in this EA is Option C of the Master Plan. (Appendix C-1)

Option C, redesigns the site to keep the parking areas close to the entrance, re-works the walk access to the pool and other site features, renovates the pool house including an addition, establishes new tennis courts and moves their location to the west end of the site, adds a new multi-use building close to the parking areas, creates a quad between the new tennis courts, pool, and new building, as well as, adds a skate park. The total estimated cost for this option is \$1,400,000.

The new design will include the following alterations;

- Renovate the existing enclosed pool house to: add 200 square feet (SF) to the Changing Rooms and add 100 SF to the office space; and
- Reconfigure the existing tennis courts (2) and parking area (+/- 10 additional parking spaces will be added); and
- Minor modifications to existing playground (same location); and
- Addition of a Volley Ball area; and
- Addition of a Skate Park; and
- New access to trails; and
- Addition of a designated area that will be flooded in winter for Skating Rink; and
- Construction of a new 2,220 SF Multi-Use Building.

2.3 OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND ELIMINATED

Option A of the Master Plan is similar to Option C, with some key differences. Option A, retains and resurfaces the tennis courts at their current location, re-configures the parking to be at the northwest area of the site, re-configures walk access, renovates the pool house but with no addition, locates the new multi-use facility at the west end of the site. The cost for Option A is \$1,060,000

The major differences in Option A when compared to Options B and C are:

- Tennis court resurfacing as opposed to new courts at new location; and
- Parking location; and
- No addition at Pool House; and
- No Skate Park; and
- General layout; and
- Reduced cost.

Option B of the Master Plan contains the same elements as Option C, only organized in a different configuration on site. The cost for Option B is the same as Option C, \$1,400,000.

3 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENTS AND POTENTIAL IMPACTS CONSIDERED

In the following section:

The *No Action Alternative* consists of the continued use of the facility as it presently exists.

The *Proposed Alternative* will be analyzed for the direct effect the existing buildings and facility (Master Plan Option C) have on the surrounding resources.

Options A and B are not analyzed in any further sections of this document.

Table 3-1 summarizes the effects described and analyzed in this chapter. The No Action Alternative is not included in the table as all this alternative does not result in any impacts to the resources discussed herein.

Levels of impact, are considered on a long term basis and are defined as follows:

- * 1 - Negligible: The resource area would not be affected, or changes would be non-detectable or if detected, effects would be slight and local. Impacts would be well below regulatory limits.
- * 2 - Minor: Changes to the resource would be measurable, although the changes would be small and localized. Impacts would be within or below regulatory limits. Mitigation measures may be necessary to reduce potential effects.
- * 3 - Moderate: Changes to the resource would be measurable and have localized and potentially regional scale impacts. Impacts would be within or below regulatory limits, but historical conditions would be altered on a short-term basis. Mitigation measures may be necessary to reduce potential effects.
- * 4 - Major: Changes would be readily measurable and would have substantial consequences on a local and potentially regional level. Impacts would exceed regulatory limits. Mitigation measures to offset the effects would be required to reduce impacts, although long-term changes to the resource would be possible.

**Table 3-1.
PROJECT ALTERNATIVES: SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL EFFECT,
COORDINATION AND MITIGATION APPLIED**

Affected Environment/ Resource Area	Alternatives	IMPACT	Agency Coordination/ Permits	Mitigation/BMPs	Comments
Geology	Proposed Alternative	1			No Impacts Identified.
Soils	Proposed Alternative	2			Minor grading and soil removal for construction of Multi-Use Facility in previously disturbed soils; minimal impact.

Air Quality	Proposed Alternative	2		<p>The construction will comply with all air quality regulations including Vermont's Prohibiting Idling of Motor Vehicles 23VSA§110.</p> <p>Water, hygroscopic materials, or non-toxic chemical stabilizers will be used as treatment to reduce fugitive dust emissions during demolition as required under Clean Air Act.</p>	Temporary, due to increased output of exhaust due to construction activity.
Climate Change	Proposed Alternative	1			No Impacts Identified.
Water Quality	Proposed Alternative	1		USGBC LEED Gold Standard stormwater management system; if applicable, "Stormwater Discharge from New Development and Redevelopment General Permit"	No Impacts Identified.
Water Resources	Proposed Alternative	1			No Impacts Identified.
E.O. 11988 Floodplains	Proposed Alternative	1			Project is not located within a floodplain No impacts identified.
E.O. 11990 Wetlands	Proposed Alternative	1		Best Management Practices during construction to control the release of sediment.	No Impacts Identified.
Threatened and Endangered Species	Proposed Alternative	1			No federally listed threatened or endangered species in or near project area.
Ecosystems, Fish and Wildlife	Proposed Alternative	1			No Impacts Identified.
Historic and Cultural Properties	Proposed Alternative	1		Compliance with inadvertent discoveries condition.	No Impacts Identified. Structures were built in the 1970's.
E.O. 12898 Environmental	Proposed Alternative	1			No disproportionate impacts to minority

Justice					or low-income populations will occur.
Noise	Proposed Alternative	2		Construction will take place only during normal business hours and all equipment will meet local, state, and federal noise regulations. Idling time shall be limited on site.	Temporary increase in noise during construction, otherwise noise levels will remain as under current uses.
Traffic Impacts	Proposed Alternative	1			No Impacts Identified.
Public Services and Utilities	Proposed Alternative	1			No Impacts Identified.
Public Health and Safety	Proposed Alternative	1		Construction vehicles and equipment will be stored on site during the project. All construction activities will be performed using qualified personnel and in accordance with the standards specified in Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations. Appropriate signage will be posted on site and in the vicinity.	No Impacts Identified.
Cumulative Impacts	Proposed Alternative	1			No Impacts Identified.

Location

The location of the Bethel Recreation Facility is 115 Pleasant St in Bethel, VT. The Latitude/Longitude for the site is N43.83060 W-72.64040 or UTM Zone 18: 0689719 E, 4855764 N. The facility is located in an open flat area at the base of Naught Hill, which is to the west. Pleasant St is Route 12 at this location which is approximately 0.5 miles to the northwest of where Route 12 intersects with Route 107. Currently, the Bethel Recreation Facility is used for a wide variety of activities. Amenities currently include; a picnic area, playground, two (2) tennis courts, an open field, and swimming pool with associated bathrooms/locker rooms. (Appendix A-1)

Topography

The town of Bethel is approximately 29,110 acres located in the center of the White River Watershed. The location is within 0.5 miles of the confluence with the White River and 0.25 miles from Third Branch of the White River. The Third Branch of the White River and Vermont Central Railroad are

located on the opposite side of Pleasant St Rocky hillsides covered with deciduous/coniferous forest surround the town with narrow valley throughout. Heap Pinnacle (~1600') is just over a mile to the west, Naught Hill (~1300') is immediately to the west and also forms a boundary to the southwest and south. Woodbury Hill (~1400') is just over a mile to the northwest. Blueberry Mountain (~1400') is approximately 2 miles to the northwest. To the east and northeast, across the Third Branch, are Shaw Hill (~1100') and Christian Hill (~1200'). All along the rivers are scattered wetlands, with the closest being less than 1000' to the southeast. Bethel is best known for the Bethel White Granite that is mined there. (Appendix A-2)

IN THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS:

The *No Action Alternative* (the continued use of the facility as it presently exists) is not evaluated. Since there is no added adverse effect to the affected environment and the consequences are only addressed in Table 3-1 in this EA.

The *Proposed Alternative* (or Option C) will have direct effect on the existing facility and is the subject for "Potential Impacts" within each affected environment.

3.1 GEOLOGY

Topography at the site varies slightly from end to end, with the north half level and the south half rising to the south. Part of the southern rise in elevation is due to the fill associated with the construction of the swimming pool and bath house and the southwest corner due to the presence of an old logging road. The level portions of the project area are more indicative of the naturally landform, though part of this is attributed to grading for the construction of the facility in the 1970's.

In the immediate project area, there is no natural defined drainage from the steep elevation to the west. To account for the overland drainage from the west, the town installed a drainage ditch along the western boundary of the Recreation Facility property. This excavation, which has no funding connection to this project, directs water to a field north of the site. Since the excavation, two (2) storm drains have been installed in the lawn to address water collection.

Bedrock found at this location is the "pinstriped" granofels member of the Moretown formation, consisting of chlorite-biotite-plagioclase-quartz granofels and feldspathic biotite quartzite.

3.1.1 Potential Impacts

No impact to the geology from the Proposed Alternative. This is supported in the Archaeological Resource Assessment (ARA) performed by Hartgen, Archeological Associates, Inc.

3.1.2 Need for Mitigation

None identified.

3.2 SOILS

The soils on the site were identified using the soil classifications of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The Site sits on Urban land-

Windsor Agawarm complex (32B). Windsor soils are in glacial outwash plains as are Agawarm that are also found on terraces. Windsor series are deep, nearly level to moderately steep sloped and excessively drained. They found in glacial outwash areas. They are identified as having a strong brown loamy sand B horizon and a light olive brown sand C horizon. While Agawarm soils have a yellow brown find sandy loam B horizon and a light olive brown sand IIC horizon. Agawam soils have a course loamy over sand or sandy-skeletal mixes mesic type Dystrochrepts. These soils are well drained. They formed in acid glacial outwash derived mainly from granite.

3.2.1 Potential Impacts

Due to the need for site grading and excavation during construction there may be a minor impact to the soils found in this project area. Because of the extensive ground disturbance that has already taken place on site, this potential is minimal and localized. There will be no long term impacts to the soils from the Proposed Alternative.

3.2.2 Need for Mitigation

None identified.

3.3 AIR QUALITY

The Clean Air Act (CAA), in accordance with 40 CFR Part 50, requires the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to set, and states adopt, National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for six principle or “criteria” air pollutants. These pollutants include: Carbon Monoxide (CO), Lead (Pb), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), Particulate Matter with a diameter less than or equal to ten micrometers (PM₁₀) and less than 2.5 micrometers (PM_{2.5}), Ozone (O₃), and Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂).

The EPA has designated specific areas as NAAQS Attainment or Non-Attainment areas. Attainment areas are those areas that meet ambient air quality standards and non-attainment areas are areas that do not meet quality standards for a specific pollutant. Air quality in Vermont is regulated by the Air Pollution Control Division (APCD) of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VTDEC). APCD enforces both state and federal air quality regulations including the Clean Air Act (CAA) of 1990 and Amendments, and the Vermont Air Pollution Control Regulations (VTDEC, 2011a). All of Vermont, including Windsor County, is currently designated as an Attainment Area for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

3.3.1 Potential Impacts

During construction, there may be some minimal temporary effects on air quality that are produced by large vehicles; such as dump trucks, graders, or back hoes.

3.3.2 Need for Mitigation

The construction will comply with all air quality regulations including Vermont’s Prohibiting Idling of Motor Vehicles 23VSA§110.

Water, hygroscopic materials, or non-toxic chemical stabilizers will be used as treatment to reduce fugitive dust emissions during demolition as required under Clean Air Act.

3.4 CLIMATE CHANGE

The CEQ has issued a draft NEPA guidance document encouraging federal agencies to include the consideration of the effects on greenhouse gas emissions and climate change in their evaluations of proposals subject to NEPA documentation (CEQ, 2010).

The climate in Bethel is best described as Snow/ Fully Humid/Extremely Continental Climate (Dfb) on the Koppen-Geiger Climate maps.

3.4.1 Potential Impacts

The use of the building and the activities within will not cause additional volume or intensity of emissions of greenhouse gases or be affected by climate change by the Proposed Alternative. This project will result in negligible impacts to the climate because this project will have no bearing on factors such as; temperature, wind speed, precipitation, cloud coverage, etc. There may be a temporary rise in the volume of greenhouse gas due to the running of construction equipment. This volume will be temporary and low. The use of building after construction will have no additional permanent effect on the volume or intensity of greenhouse gas emissions than the No Action Alternative. The new facility being constructed will be 2,220 Square Feet, used for restrooms, office space, warming hut for skating, and a multi-use room. The Town of Bethel is dedicated to energy efficiency and conserving resources.

3.4.2 Need for Mitigation

None identified

3.5 WATER QUALITY

Vermont administers the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) and the Vermont Water Quality Regulations. Surface water runoff will increase due to the increase in impervious area from the current level of development. Water quality is protected by compliance with the conditions of the discharge permits issued by the VTDEC. A “Stormwater Discharge from New Development and Redevelopment General Permit” is required for discharges of stormwater from new development projects equal to or greater than one (1) acre or discharge from expansion or redevelopment of an existing impervious surface. A “Construction Stormwater Permit” addresses stormwater runoff from earth disturbance activity of one (1) or more acres of land during construction.

The VTDEC has adopted a Groundwater Protection Rule and Strategy to protect Vermont’s groundwater resource (VTDEC, 2005). This rule provides for the establishment of Groundwater Source Protection Areas to protect public water supplies obtained from groundwater.

3.5.1 Potential Impacts

The VTDEC should be contacted to identify the need for permits described above. The renovation of building and construction of new Multi-Use Facility will have no permanent effect on the Total Daily Maximum Load (TMDL) since the output will remain similar to the current discharge rates.

3.5.2 Need for Mitigation

Potential adverse effects from the increase in impervious area will be mitigated by the on-site United States Green Building Council (USGBC) Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Standard stormwater management system and compliance with the conditions listed in the “Stormwater Discharge from New Development and Redevelopment General Permit” for any off-site conveyance of stormwater, if it is determined that such permits are required.

3.6 FLOODPLAINS

A floodplain is an area of land adjacent to a stream or river that stretches from the banks of its channel to the base of the enclosing valley walls and experiences flooding during periods of high discharge. Executive Order 11988 directs federal agencies to assume leadership in avoiding direct or indirect support of development in the 100 year floodplain.

3.6.1 Potential Impacts

Per Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) number 50027C 0159E, effective September 28, 2007, the site is located outside the floodplain and the activity does not affect floodplain values. (Appendix A-3)

3.6.2 Need for Mitigation

None identified.

3.7 WETLANDS

A wetland is a land area that is saturated with water, either permanently or seasonally, such that it takes on the characteristics of a distinct ecosystem. Executive Order 11990 requires federal agencies to avoid adverse impacts to wetlands to the extent possible. Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) establishes a wetland permit program administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). (Appendix A-4)

3.7.1 Potential Impacts

Neither the United State Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps nor the VTANR Natural Resource Atlas show any wetlands associated directly with the project site.

In addition, federal agencies are required under 44 CFR Part 9 to provide public notice and review of plans for actions in floodplains and wetlands. The public notice for this disaster and public review of the Draft EA meet FEMA’s public notice and review obligations.

3.7.2 Need for Mitigation

During renovation of the building Best Management Practices to control the release of sediment must be used.

3.8 THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) serves as the primary federal protection for species and habitat, by providing a formal designation and implementing programs through which the conservation of both populations and habitats may be achieved. The Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) requires federal agencies that fund activities that may adversely affect essential fish habitat (EFH) or federally managed fish species to consult regarding the potential adverse effects of actions on EFH.

A search of USFWS's Federally Listed Threatened and Endangered Species in Vermont, (last updated) March 12, 2012 reveals no species located anywhere in the Town of Bethel. A search of the VTANR Natural Resource Atlas, on June 3, 2014, supported this research and also showed the project area void of any state or local threatened or endangered species. (Appendix A-5 and A-6)

3.8.1 Potential Impacts

There are no identified impacts to Endangered or Threatened Species or their habitats.

3.8.2 Need for Mitigation

None identified.

3.9 ECOSYSTEMS, FISH AND WILDLIFE

The topography is mostly cleared field bordered by forested upland to the west and state highways to the east and south. The biological diversity of the Site includes diversity in plant and animal makeup and their supporting habitats and natural communities.

3.9.1 Potential Impacts

Short-term phases of construction and long-term re-development will have no significant effect on wildlife habitat. The natural functions of the site will not be significantly altered as a result of the Proposed Alternative.

3.9.2 Need for Mitigation

None identified.

3.10 HISTORIC AND CULTURAL PROPERTIES

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 defines a historic property as "any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in, or eligible for inclusion on the National

Register”. Criteria for listing a property on the National Register of Historic Places can be found in 36 C.F.R. Part 60. Cultural properties include a broader category of physical assets, such as archaeological, architectural, and historical properties, that do not meet National Register criteria, but which may have cultural value.

As defined in the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation’s (ACHP) regulations, the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for a project is defined as, the “geographic area or area within which an undertaking may directly or indirectly cause changes in the character of or use of historical properties, if any such properties exist” (36 CFR 800.16[d]). The APE is based upon the “potential” for effect, which may differ for aboveground resources (historic structures and landscapes) and subsurface resources (archaeological sites). Factors with potential to cause effects include but are not limited to; noise, vibration, visual (setting), traffic, atmosphere, construction, indirect and cumulative.

For this undertaking the APE should be considered the entire parcel of land that the current and future Bethel Recreation Facility occupies. Equipment and material staging will be located on the existing paved area within the recreation facility. (Appendix A-7)

The Bethel Recreation Facility was developed in the early 1970’s and the only structures present are the pool house, pool deck and picnic area. These are all one structure and located adjacent to the pool in the southern portion of the parcel. It is likely that the roof over the deck and picnic area were additions from c. 2004 based on hand drawn plans. The architectural style of the facility and its amenities are very basic and common to recreational facilities and parks in the built in the last 50 years. (Appendix A-8)

The Bethel Recreation Facility must be regarded in two (2) ways to determine eligibility for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and when identifying historic properties. The above ground resources which are the facility and its amenities and the below ground resources which are the potential cultural resources that are contained within the natural soils below the surface.

When determining the eligibility of the Bethel Recreation Facility for inclusion into the NRHP we must consider the following measures of integrity; location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. In addition, we must consider Criterion A, association with events that have made a significant contribution to broad patterns of history,; Criterion B, association with the lives of significant persons in the past,; Criterion C, embodiment of distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, and or Criterion D, potential to yield information important in history or prehistory.

Topographically, the Bethel Recreation Facility is considered to contain potential Archaeological Sensitivity because of its proximity to the White River and the Third Branch of the White River. These watercourses served as Native American travel “super highways” with access to much of the region readily available for migration, or trade. This location would be a prime location for encampments as well with protection from all sides with the mountainous terrain. All along the rivers are scattered wetlands, with the closest being less than 1000 feet to the southeast. These wetlands would have served as bountiful hunting grounds for various local wildlife that the Native Americans would have utilized in everyday life.

Based on these reasons, further investigation was recommended by FEMA (in the 3/28/14 letter to DHP) to verify the project location’s actual archaeological sensitivity, determine whether or not this particular location could be considered eligible for listing on the NRHP under Criterion D. On March 10, 2014, FEMA contacted Scott Dillon, State Survey Archaeologist, who recommended based on general

sensitivity that the APE undergo an ARA for this project be subject to review by a qualified archaeologist in accordance with the “Guidelines for Conducting Archeology in Vermont & Appendices” (Appendix C-3).

The Town of Bethel hired Hartgen Archaeological Associates, Inc. (Hartgen) to conduct the ARA. Hartgen completed a site visit on May 15, 2014 and in a subsequent letter on May 19 and the ARA dated May 2014, determined that no further archaeological review was required. (Appendix C-4 and C-5) This determination was made primarily due to the extensive amount of ground disturbance already conducted on site. FEMA agrees with this determination and does not recommend any further archaeological investigation.

Taking the four (4) criteria into effect, the above ground resources at the Bethel Recreation Facility does not contain any unique qualities that would distinguish it for any of these categories. The materials, location, setting, design, association and feeling may have been all consistent for the past 40 years, but do not meet NRHP Criteria for historical significance.

Based on NRHP Criteria for Evaluation (36 CFR Part 63) and National Register Bulletin 15 “How to Apply the National Register Criteria” as guidance, FEMA recommended that; the Bethel Recreation Facility should be considered ineligible for listing on the NRHP under Criteria A, B, and C. FEMA submitted this determination to DHP on March 28, 2014 and received concurrence on April 4, 2014. (Appendix C-2) On June 6, 2014, FEMA sent DHP a determination of “No Historic Properties Affected” under Criterion D based on the results of the ARA and the lack of need for further archaeological survey. DHP concurred with FEMA’s determination on July 7, 2014, concluding the Section 106 consultation process between FEMA and DHP.

3.10.1 Potential Impacts

With no historical resources located in the project area, this undertaking will have no impacts to any historic properties.

3.10.2 Need for Mitigation

In the event that archaeological materials (e.g. Native American pottery, stone tools, old bottles, historic bricks) and/or human remains are uncovered during site preparation or construction, the Subgrantee/Town of Bethel shall require that their work crew/construction contractor immediately stop ground disturbing work within the vicinity of the discovery and take reasonable measures to avoid and minimize harm to the materials and discovery area. The Subgrantee/Town of Bethel is responsible for ensuring that archaeological discoveries and human remains associated with this FEMA-funded work are adequately secured, access to the area is restricted, and that the Grantee/ Vermont Emergency Management Division of the Department of Public Safety (VEM) and the FEMA Region 1 Environmental/Historic Preservation (Acting Regional Environmental Officer; Lydia Kachadoorian (857) 205-2860, are promptly notified of the discovery so that they may coordinate with the Vermont State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). The Grantee/VEM will advise the Subgrantee/Town of Bethel to comply with procedures for the discovery of human skeletal remains established in 13 VSA 3761 (Unauthorized Removal of Human Remains), 13 VSA 3764 (Cemeteries and Monuments – Grave markers and historic tablets) and 18 VSA 5212 (Permit to Remove Dead Bodies). Violation of Vermont state law on the treatment of human remains may jeopardize FEMA funding for this project. FEMA

Region 1, in consultation with the SHPO and other parties, shall assess the nature and character of discoveries and determine how the project may best move forward. In the event of a discovery, the Subgrantee/ Town of Bethel may not proceed with project implementation until FEMA has provided written approval to reinitiate of work.

3.11 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice, 59 CFR 7629) directs federal agencies to make achieving environmental justice part of their mission by identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations, particularly when such analysis is required by NEPA.

Socioeconomic and demographic data for residents in the project vicinity was studied to determine if a disproportionate number (defined as greater than 50 percent) of minority or low-income persons have the potential to be affected by the alternatives.

Low-income is identified as “one whose median household income is at or below the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines.” Income data based on Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) guidelines are difficult to gather, so Census Bureau data are often used for environmental justice analyses.

The Demographics of Bethel is typical of most of the surrounding towns within the County. L Bethel’s median household income is \$52,431. The Town consists of 2030 people and is 96.8% white, 0.6% African American, races consist of Native American (0.1%), and Asian (0.4%).

3.11.1 Potential Impacts

The location of this facility is not being altered and is open to the public, this project will not result in any disproportionate or adverse impacts to this community.

3.11.2 Need for Mitigation

None identified.

3.12 NOISE

The EPA has developed federal noise-emission standards, identifying major sources of noise and determining appropriate noise levels for activities that would infringe on public health and welfare. The “Levels Document” is the standard reference in the field of environmental noise assessment. EPA identifies a 24-hour exposure level of 70 decibels as the level of environmental noise which will prevent any measurable hearing loss over a lifetime.

Levels of 55 decibels outdoors and 45 decibels indoors are identified as “preventing activity interference and annoyance”. U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) has established acceptable noise levels and ranges for construction equipment.

3.12.1 Potential Impacts

Construction activities would temporarily increase noise levels in the project area with the use of earthmoving equipment and power tools. No permanent increase in ambient noise will occur since use will remain about the same as under current uses. Construction hours will adhere to all State and Local noise ordinances.

3.12.2 Need for Mitigation

Construction will take place only during normal business hours and all equipment will meet local, state, and federal noise regulations. Idling time shall be limited on site.

3.13 TRAFFIC IMPACTS

This area serves as a high volume traffic area with the presence of the Whitcomb High School immediately to the north of the Recreation Facility. This site location on Route 12, north of the interchange with Route 107, is a common access point to all directions in this region. If this work is performed during school session, there may be delays during the morning and late afternoon commutes if construction vehicles are attempting to get to the site while students and faculty are in transit to or from school.

3.13.1 Potential Impacts

There will be a temporary increase in construction vehicles during the renovation. After the construction is completed traffic will remain about the same as under current uses.

3.13.2 Need for Mitigation

None identified.

3.14 PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

Hazardous materials are regulated by both the federal and state governments. The two main laws that pertain to hazardous materials are Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA).

CERCLA was enacted in 1980 and amended in 1986. It was created to regulate activity on closed and abandoned hazardous waste sites, determine liability for releases of hazardous materials at abandoned sites, and provide a funding mechanism for the cleanup of hazardous waste sites. CERCLA also established the National Priority List (NPL) which is a database of sites with known or suspected releases of hazardous materials (USEPA, 2012a). RCRA was enacted in 1976 and amended in 1984 and regulates the generation, transportation, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials. It also set up a framework for the designation and classification of hazardous materials. In Vermont, RCRA generators are regulated by the VTDEC Waste Management Division (VTWMD).

3.14.1 Potential Impacts

There are no hazardous materials anticipated at this site. There may be the potential for oil leakage or gas spillage for on-site equipment usage and storage, but impacts would be negligible.

3.14.2 Need for Mitigation

Construction vehicles and equipment will be stored on site during the project. All construction activities will be performed using qualified personnel and in accordance with the standards specified in Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations. Appropriate signage will be posted on site and in the vicinity.

3.15 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

The Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA requires an assessment of cumulative effects during the decision making process for federal projects. Cumulative effects are defined as “the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency(federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions” (40 CFR 1508.7). Cumulative effects are considered for both the No Action and Proposed Action alternatives. Cumulative effects were determined by combining the effects of the alternative with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions.

3.15.1 Potential Impacts

Based on guidelines, no significant cumulative impacts would occur from the Proposed Action Alternative. While some terrestrial habitat would be eliminated, due to the limited scope of the work and the proposed mitigation no loss of any sensitive cultural, biological or terrestrial resources is expected that would contribute a measurable amount to the cumulative effects. The renovation to the Recreation Facility would not result in increased capacity, nor are there any plans for future land use development in the area, as this is the only proposed project. No other construction projects are associated with this plan in this area or adjacent.

3.15.2 Need for Mitigation

None identified.

4 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The Town of Bethel has engaged the public in a variety of methods from social media to public presentations. Below is a more detailed list of the methods used by the Town to solicit public involvement.

4.1 PUBLIC MEETINGS/OUTREACH

The Town of Bethel has performed the following measures starting as early as 2012 with some outreach still ongoing:

- Publishing of Recreation Committee minutes regarding the Master Plan in the electronic newsletter, *Bethel Courier Online*; and
- Publishing of the Master Plan on the Bethel website; and
- Publishing of information regarding the Master Plan on the Bethel Facebook page; and
- Published maps and a summary of the Master Plan in the 2012 Annual Report (published and distributed in January 2013); and
- Setting up a display and comment table at the 2013 Town Meeting; and
- Providing for two public presentations in the spring and summer of 2013: one during Green Up Day activities and one during the Bethel Pool Open House; and
- Posting of maps depicting plan options at the Bethel Recreation Center during the 2013 pool season and soliciting anonymous comments (maps continue to be displayed); and
- Presentation to Whitcomb High School grades 7 through 9 and soliciting anonymous comments in spring 2013; and
- Presentation to the Bethel Area Rotary in June 2013; and
- Prior to the initiation of the Master Plan process, the Recreation Committee had developed and distributed a survey throughout Bethel and neighboring communities.

4.2 FEMA PUBLICATION OF DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NOTICE AND REQUEST FOR COMMENT

To meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), FEMA has prepared a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) to identify and evaluate historic and environmental resources that might be affected by proposed improvements to the Bethel Recreation Facility. As part of its goal to ensure that good management decisions are made, FEMA invites the public to review and comment on the Draft EA and to provide FEMA with information it may not have considered in its review.

Beginning on Friday October 24, 2014, the Draft EA will be posted on FEMA's website at <http://www.fema.gov/resource-document-library>, and on the Town's website at <http://townofbethelvt.com/>. The comment period will last for twenty-one (21) days, ending on Friday November 14, 2014. A copy of the Draft EA will also be available by Friday October 24, 2014 at the Bethel Town Manager and Town Clerk Office, 134 South Main Street, Bethel (8:00 am to 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm, Monday-Friday: Bethel Town Manager's hours), and at the Bethel Public Library, 106 Main Street, Bethel (2:00 pm to 7:00 pm Monday and Wednesday).

Comments on the Draft EA can be submitted by mailing Lydia Kachadoorian, Acting Regional Environmental Officer at, FEMA Region 1, 99 High Street 6th Floor, Boston, Massachusetts 02110, or by emailing Lydia.Kachadoorian@fema.dhs.gov, or by faxing 617-956-7574.

5 LIST OF PREPARERS

This document was prepared by:

Marcus Tate
Historic Preservation Specialist
FEMA Region 1, Mitigation Division
Environmental & Historic Preservation Office
99 High St., 6th floor
Boston, MA 02110

This document was edited by:

Lydia A. Kachadoorian, RPA
Acting Regional Environmental Officer (Acting REO)
FEMA Region I, Mitigation Division
Environmental & Historic Preservation Office (EHP)
99 High St., 6th Floor
Boston, MA 02110

6 REFERENCES

CEQ, 2010. Memorandum for Heads of Federal Departments and Agencies. Subject: Draft NEPA guidance on consideration of the effects of climate change and greenhouse gas emissions. Authored by: Nancy H. Sutley, Chair, Council on Environmental Quality, February 18, 2010.

FEMA, 2010. Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Maps, available online at: https://msc.fema.gov/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/info?storeId=10001&catalogId=10001&langId=-1&content=firnetteHelp_A&title=FIRMettes

Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). (1970) Regulations For Implementing The Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act. Retrieved July 2014 from http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/ceq_regulations/Council_on_Environmental_Quality_Regulations.pdf

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). (1998). Final Guidance for Incorporating Environmental Justice Concerns in EPA's NEPA Compliance Analysis. Retrieved July 2014 from http://www.epa.gov/compliance/resources/policies/ej/ej_guidance_nepa_epa0498.pdf

EPA. (2010). Ecoregions of New England. Retrieved June 2014 from <http://www.epa.gov/region1/neaeb2010/pdfs/PosterHellyerGreg.pdf>

EPA. (2009). EPA Identifies Noise Levels Affecting Health and Welfare. Retrieved June 2014 from <http://www.epa.gov/history/topics/noise/01.html>

EPA. (2012). Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. Retrieved June 2014 from <http://www.epa.gov/lawsregs/laws/rcra.html>

Executive Order No. 11988. Floodplain Management, May 24, 1977, 42 C.F.R. 26951.

Executive Order No. 11990. Protection of Wetlands, May 24, 1977, 42 C.F.R. 26961

Executive Order No. 12898. Environmental Justice for Low Income and Minority Populations. 1994, 59 C.F.R. 7629.

FEMA, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (VDHP) and Vermont Emergency Management (VEM). (2011). Programmatic Agreement among FEMA Region I, VDHP and VEM, dated May 9, 2011.

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Web Soil Survey Mapper. Retrieved June 2014 from <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/WebSoilSurvey.aspx>

U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). Demographic Profile, Windsor County, Vermont. Retrieved June 2014 from http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/2010_census.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Soil Survey of Windsor County, Vermont. Retrieved June 2014 from http://soils.usda.gov/survey/online_surveys/vermont/windsorVT1918/windsorVT1918.pdf

U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). (2009). Federal Highway Administration. Construction Equipment Noise Levels and Ranges. Retrieved June 2014 from <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/handbook/09.html>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services ((USFWS). National Wetlands Inventory Mapper. Retrieved June 2014 from <http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/Data/Mapper.html>

VT Agency of Natural Resources (VT ANR). (June 2008). Basin 11 Water Quality Management Plan. Retrieved June 2014 from http://www.vtwaterquality.org/planning/docs/pl_basin11%20Plan.6-08.pdf

7 U.S.C. 4201 et seq. Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981.

16 U.S.C. 470 et seq. National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Public Law 102 575, as amended.

16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq. Endangered Species Act of 1973.

16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq. Magnuson-Stevens Fishery conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006. Public Law 94-265.

33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq. Clean Water Act of 1972.

36 CFR Part 800, Protection of Historic Properties, (incorporating amendments effective August 5, 2004).

40 CFR 50. National Primary & Secondary Ambient Air Quality Standards. 1971 as amended 1998

42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq. Clean Air Act of 1970.

42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq. National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Public Law 91-190, as amended.

50 CFR 10.13. Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended.