

**Federal Emergency Management Agency
PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Williamson County Southwest Regional Park Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project, Texas
HMGP-DR-1999-TX PROJECT #19

Interested persons are hereby notified that Williamson County has applied to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), through the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM), for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding under Section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program provides grants to states and local governments to implement long-term hazard mitigation measures that reduce the loss of life and property due to natural disasters and to enable mitigation measures to be implemented during the immediate recovery from a disaster.

FEMA proposes to provide funding to Williamson County to implement a hazardous fuels reduction program to reduce wildfire hazards along the boundaries of Southwest Regional Park that are adjacent to residential development. The proposed action would reduce the quantity of hazardous vegetative fuel along the park perimeter to limit the movement of a wildfire across the park boundary. The proposed project area includes the 50 feet adjacent to approximately 4 miles (21,120 linear feet) of the park boundary for a total of approximately 24 acres. The fuels reduction activities would include trimming or cutting highly flammable, dead, and diseased vegetation within the project area, selectively trimming trees, and cutting tree branches up to 10 feet from ground level. Some trees larger than 8 inches in diameter may be selectively removed. The cut vegetation and debris will be either ground or mulched on-site and temporarily stored at the park. Some areas may be reseeded with short grasses to reduce erosion. Work would only be conducted between September 1 and February 28 to minimize impacts to federally listed bird species.

A draft Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to assess the potential impacts of the proposed action and alternatives on the human and natural environment in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the Council for Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500 – 1508), the National Historic Preservation Act, Executive Order 11988, Executive Order 11990, and the implementing regulations of FEMA (44 CFR Parts 9 and 10). The draft EA evaluates alternatives that provide for compliance with applicable environmental laws. The alternatives evaluated include (1) no action; (2) the proposed action described above. Portions of the project are located within the 100-year floodplain and this notice serves as early notice for compliance with Executive Order 11988.

The draft EA is available for review and comment at the Williamson County Courthouse, 710 South Main Street, Georgetown, Texas, from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Monday through Friday from July 20, 2015 to August 20, 2015. An electronic version of the draft EA can be requested from Dorothy Weir, FEMA Region 6, at dorothy.weir@fema.dhs.gov or viewed on FEMA's website at <http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents>.

The comment period will end 30 days from the initial notice publication date. Written comments on the draft EA can be mailed, emailed, or faxed to Dorothy Weir, Environmental Specialist, FEMA Region 6, 800 N Loop 288, Denton, TX 76209, Fax: 940-383-7299; dorothy.weir@fema.dhs.gov. If no substantive comments are received, the draft EA will become final and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be issued for the project. Substantive comments will be addressed as appropriate in the final documents.