Draft Environmental Assessment

# WALKER CORBIN GROUP HOUSING SITE (LV06)

## FEMA-4277-DR-LA

Livingston Parish, Louisiana

*November 2016*

**U.S. Department of Homeland Security**
**Federal Emergency Management Agency**
Region 6
800 North Loop 288
Denton, TX 76209

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| APE | Area of Potential Effect |
| BMP | Best Management Practices |
| CERCLA | Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act |
| CWA | Clean Water Act |
| EA | Environmental Assessment |
| EIS | Environmental Impact Statement |
| EO | Executive Order |
| EPA | Environmental Protection Agency |
| ESA | Endangered Species Act |
| FEMA | Federal Emergency Management Agency |
| FONSI | Finding of No Significant Impact |
| IHP | Individuals and Households Program |
| LDEQ | Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality |
| MHU | Manufactured Housing Unit |
| NEPA | National Environmental Policy Act |
| NPDES | National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System |
| NWI | National Wetlands Inventory |
| RCRA | Resource Conservation and Recovery Act |
| SHPO | State Historic Preservation Office |
| T&E | Threatened and Endangered Species |
| UFAS | Uniform Federal Accessibility Standard |
| USACE | United States Army Corps of Engineers |
| USFWS | United States Fish and Wildlife Service |

## 1. Introduction

During the Incident Period of August 11, 2016, to August 31, 2016, prolonged rainfall occurred over the state of Louisiana dropping unprecedented rain, exceeding 20 inches. On August 14, 2016, President Obama declared a major disaster (FEMA-4277-DR-LA) for the State of Louisiana, due to the severe storms and subsequent flooding, authorizing the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide federal assistance in designated areas. FEMA proposes to administer this disaster assistance pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act), Public Law 93-288, as amended. Section 408 of the Stafford Act authorizes FEMA's Individual and Households Program (IHP) to provide emergency and temporary housing for eligible disaster survivors, whose homes are uninhabitable or destroyed as a result of the declared event.

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the President's Council on Environmental Quality regulations to implement NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 1500-1508), and FEMA's procedures for implementing NEPA (FEMA Instruction 108-1-1). FEMA is required to consider potential environmental impacts before funding or approving actions and projects. This Draft EA will analyze the potential environmental impacts of the proposed temporary group housing site, as part of an expedited review process. FEMA will use the findings in this Draft EA to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

## 2. Purpose and Need

Catastrophic damage from severe storms and flooding has resulted in an extraordinary demand for housing assistance in communities within Livingston Parish, one of the hardest hit areas in Louisiana. The August 2016 prolonged rainfall resulted in catastrophic flooding and has been called the worst U.S. natural disaster since Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

Thousands of homes and businesses were submerged and officials estimated that 75 percent of homes in Livingston Parish were a total loss. Many rivers and waterways, particularly the Amite and Comity rivers, reached record levels, and rainfall exceeded 20 inches in multiple parishes.

Louisiana's governor, John Bel Edwards, called the disaster a "historic, unprecedented flooding event" and declared a state of emergency. Because of the large number of homeowners without flood insurance that were affected, the federal government is providing disaster aid through FEMA.

The purpose of this action is to fulfill FEMA's mandate under the Individual and Households Program to expeditiously provide temporary housing for eligible disaster victims. As of November 4, 2016, the State has received 151,941 requests for federal assistance and of these requests, approximately 528 (total Pre-Placement Interviews) are for temporary housing assistance in the Livingston Parish area. As of November 4, 2016, the population approved, and pending for rental resources, private sites, commercial sites, and Multi-Family Lease and Repair Program in Livingston Parish is 1,712.

Most of this demand will be met by repairing and improving existing multi-family housing to be utilized as temporary housing, placing a Manufactured Housing Unit (MHU) on an applicant's private site, or providing them with a MHU on an available pad leased in a commercial park.

However, once these options are exhausted, FEMA estimates many applicants still will remain in need of direct housing, thus supporting the need to develop a temporary group-housing site, hereinafter a "group site."

## 3. Environmental Review Process

In order to meet the urgent needs of disaster survivors requiring temporary housing, FEMA has implemented an expedited environmental review process. The purpose of this document is to assist FEMA in fulfilling its environmental review responsibilities under NEPA and serve as a vehicle to document compliance under other applicable environmental and historic laws and orders. Laws and orders addressed through this Draft EA include: the Clean Air Act; Clean Water Act; Endangered Species Act; National Historic Preservation Act; Farmland Protection Policy Act (Prime Farmland), Executive Order (EO) 11988 (Floodplain Management); EO 11990 (Protection of Wetlands); EO 12898 (Environmental Justice); Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA); and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). Cumulative impacts are also evaluated. Agency coordination/consultation is being conducted on a site by site basis as necessary.

The scope of FEMA's environmental review includes evaluating project alternatives, characterizing the affected environment, identifying potential environmental impacts, and outlining ways to reduce or minimize adverse effects. This Draft EA examines the site-specific environmental impacts associated with building a proposed FEMA group site on private or publicly owned land to be leased by the General Service Administration for this purpose.

This Draft EA was prepared based on a site evaluation, document research, and resource agency information. The public participation period will be brief as necessitated by the emergency circumstances. Agency coordination and consultation will be deemed complete at the end of the public comment period. FEMA believes that this process will allow for sufficient action analysis and meet the goal of providing timely federal assistance to disaster survivors.

## 4. Site Selection Process and Alternatives

NEPA requires investigation and evaluation of reasonable project alternatives as part of the project environmental review process. At a minimum, FEMA's NEPA implementing regulations require the "no action" and "proposed action" alternatives be evaluated. Concurrent to the proposed action, other federally assisted housing options are being utilized first. These options include minor home repairs, rental assistance, and installing a MHU on a private site or in an existing commercial site but these options are rapidly depleting due to the high demand. Therefore, a remaining alternative is to build an emergency, temporary group site when the above options do not satisfy the demand.

In order to expedite the group housing site selection process, FEMA is working closely with local officials and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to identify potential sites. Site suitability is then determined by a site visit, a historical land use review, and other records reviews. Important factors considered in choosing a site include: demand for temporary housing in that area, group acceptance, proximity of group services/amenities (schools, healthcare facilities, public transportation, etc.), engineering and construction feasibility, access to utilities, land use compatibilities, property owner terms, costs to develop and maintain the site, and environmental/cultural resource sensitivities. Although various alternative sites have been and continue to be identified, the current need for housing has limited this Draft EA to analysis

of one suitable site alternative. The Walker Corbin Group Site was selected for further detailed analysis because it meets the basic site suitability and selection criteria.

**Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative**

Under the No Action alternative, FEMA would not develop a temporary group site in Livingston Parish, east of the Town of Walker. Displaced residents would continue to stay with relatives/friends, in hotels, or other temporary locations until they resolve their own long-term housing needs. This alternative may jeopardize public health, safety, and well-being, and would not address the project's purpose and need. In addition, the site would remain in agricultural usage until the landowners pursues other options.

**Alternative 2 – Develop the Walker Corbin Group Site with MHUs (Proposed action)**

The proposed action would provide temporary housing for eligible displaced residents by the August 2016, floods in southeastern Louisiana. Displaced residents would be temporarily relocated to the proposed site with an expected occupancy in an MHU for up to 18 months (which includes a site deactivation period) while they resolve their permanent housing needs. This alternative would assist in fulling FEMA's mandate under the IHP to expeditiously provide temporary housing for eligible displaced residents. This alternative would address the proposed project's purpose and need.

### 4.1 Project Location and Site Description

The proposed Walker Corbin Group Site is located just east of the Town of Walker, Livingston Parish, Louisiana (30.49666, -90.83643). Figures 1 and 2 show the proposed site and vicinity. The site (33 acres) is located immediately south of the junction of North Corbin Road (State Road 449) and Florida Blvd (Federal Highway 190). A railroad runs adjacent to and immediately north of Florida Blvd along the northern boundary of the property. The site is relatively flat, previously cleared land about half of which is currently used for hay production. The southern half was not cut for hay in 2016 and is considered to be a fallow grassland. Within the entire site are a few scattered trees, including water oak, red oak, sweet bay magnolia, sweetgum, popcorn, and pine, and two areas of wetland habitat (one about 2 acres in size located along the middle and east boundary of the site and the other about 0.5 acre in size located in the southeast corner). In addition, a small ditch running west to east across the middle of the property has been identified as waters of the United States by the USACE. The surrounding areas to the east and south are woodlands. To the west is the Walker Industrial Park with existing commercial businesses. The slight slope of the property is generally from north to south and from west to east. However, a drainage ditch along the western boundary and drainage swales within the site also influence the direction of drainage flow on the proposed site. There are no structures on the proposed site. Photographs of existing site conditions are included as Figures 3-10.

### 4.2 Proposed Project Description

The proposed Walker Corbin Group Site would utilize up to 15 acres of the total site. FEMA would contract for the construction of up to 100 gravel pads for the placement of MHUs to house displaced families. The conceptual site layout is shown at Figure 11. Development of the site would require the installation of utilities, asphalt for main access roads, trash collection bins, and

handicap parking lot, and crushed rock for MHU pads and resident parking. The site design would be such as to limit clearing of trees and avoidance of waters of the United States, wetlands, and areas within the 100-yr floodplain.

The following specific site development components would be included with this project:

- Site preparation would include clearing, grading, and removal of some trees, other woody vegetation, and debris.
- Infrastructure for water, sewer, and electrical services exist off of Florida Blvd and Comar Drive (inside the Walker Industrial Park), and would be extended onto the site.
- New lines and fire hydrants would be installed on the site.
- Storm water drainage would be developed within the site.
- Uniform Federal Accessibility Standard (UFAS) site features include 20% of the units meeting UFAS, and 100% of onsite essential services/facilities (such as mailbox kiosk) would be UFAS compatible.
- Erosion control would be established during the construction period and a perimeter fence would be constructed around the project site.

FEMA would operate and maintain the site during the term of occupancy. When the temporary housing need has ended, FEMA expects that the MHUs would be hauled from the site and returned to a FEMA storage facility. The project site would be reasonably restored to its previous condition and seeded, or left per the lease terms with the landowner.

## 5. Affected Environment and Potential Impacts

This section is organized by individual resources. It includes a description of the existing conditions at the project area and provides an analysis of potential environmental impacts for each alternative. Impacts to the following resources as a result of the proposed action were found to be discountable and are not evaluated further in this Draft EA: geology, soils and seismicity, air quality, climate change, coastal zones, wildlife and fish, prime farmland, noise, traffic, public service and utilities, and public health and safety. Where potential impacts exist, conditions or mitigation measures to offset these impacts are detailed below. Table 1 summarizes the results of the environmental review process. No safety issues were identified on the project site.

### 5.1 Water Resources

This section provides an overview of the affected area and potential environmental effects of the No Action and alternatives on water resources, including water quality, streams, wetlands, and floodplains.

A review of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) topographic map accessed on November 4, 2016 (available online at https://fws.gov/wetlands/), does not show any wetlands or waters of the United States on the site. However, a site visit confirmed the presence of two low areas and a drainage ditch with wetland characteristics. Further, the Regulatory Branch, New Orleans District of the USACE made a preliminary determination on July 18, 2014, that these wetlands were jurisdictional wetlands and the ditch was waters of the United States (Figure 12).

### 5.1.1 Water Quality

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) was established under the Clean Water Act (CWA) and regulates wastewater discharges from point sources. NPDES regulations require that construction sites, resulting in greater than one acre of disturbance, obtain a permit from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), or the corresponding state agency where the permitting role has been assumed by the state. The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) is the state agency that has assumed this responsibility. The USACE has identified the ditch across the property as waters of the United States.

**Alternative 1- No Action Alternative**

The site would remain in a grassland condition with scattered trees until developed for commercial purposes. Due to the flat topography and vegetative state of the site, there is little to no erosion on the site. Therefore, there is little possibility for runoff with turbidity or sediment to adversely impact water quality in the short-term. Any development would have to be conducted in accordance with federal, state and local laws and regulations. Therefore, the long-term impacts to water quality are expected to be minor.

**Alternative 2 - Develop the Walker Corbin Group Site with MHUs (Proposed action)**

Appropriate best management practices (BMP) would be implemented during site development to minimize sediment migration from the site into drainage ditches. The clearing of large trees would be limited to those absolutely necessary to appropriately site the housing pads. Surface runoff would be controlled by using siltation controls such as silt fencing around the construction site to minimize erosion of materials off the site. Any disturbed soil would be protected with seed or sod after construction in order to decrease the amount of soil eroded by rainfall and runoff. Any fill stored on site would be covered to prevent erosion. In order to control storm water runoff, the contractor would be required to construct drainage features so that runoff would not cause nuisance flooding during heavy rainfall events. The drainage system would be required to meet state and parish requirements. Thus, above actions would prevent the degradation of water quality as a result of silt-laden runoff from the construction site.

Overall, the placement of up to 100 gravel pads for MHUs on the proposed site would avoid the ditch identified as waters of the United States, and the proposed action alternative would have no significant impacts to water quality in the area.

### 5.1.2 Wetlands

The CWA and EO 11990 define wetlands as “those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence if vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.”

A site visit confirmed the presence of two low areas with wetland characteristics. The Regulatory Branch, New Orleans District of the USACE made a preliminary determination on July 18, 2014, that these wetlands were jurisdictional wetlands (Figure 12).

**Alternative 1- No Action Alternative**

Under the No Action alternative, the proposed site would remain in its current condition until developed for commercial use. The wetlands identified on the southeast portion of the site could be impacted by commercial development. However, any such development would have to be conducted in accordance with federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Therefore, the short- and long-term impacts to wetlands are expected to be minor.

**Alternative 2 – Develop the Walker Corbin Group Site with MHUs (Proposed action)**

Under the proposed action, the wetland areas identified on the project site would be avoided by development of the group site. Thus, no wetlands would be filled or otherwise impacted by the temporary placement of MHUs on the site. Therefore, there would be no short- or long-term impacts to wetlands.

### 5.1.3 Floodplains

EO 11988 Floodplain Management was issued to avoid or minimize short- and long-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains. Based on the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) panel number 22063C0230E dated April 3, 2012, accessed on October 31, 2016 (at https://msc.fema.gov/portal), the southern portion of the proposed site is located within the 100-year flood plain, Zone AE. The remainder of the site is located either within the 500-year floodplain or in Zone X, an area of minimal flood hazard (Figure 13).

**Alternative 1- No Action Alternative**

Under the No Action alternative, the site would continue to be zoned for commercial purposes. However, any such development would have to be conducted in accordance with federal, state and local laws and regulations. Therefore, the short- and long-term impacts to water quality are expected to be minor.

**Alternative 2 - Develop the Walker Corbin Group Site with MHUs (Proposed action)**

Under the proposed action, the group site would be placed only on that portion of the site that is within the 500-year floodplain or Zone X, thereby avoiding all potential impacts to the 100-year floodplain, Zone AE. Some trenching for utilities would be required which would most likely originate from Florida Blvd or the adjacent commercial park to the west. Efforts would be made to avoid utility work in the 100-year floodplain, but it is possible some trenching or directional boring could occur within the 100-year floodplain in order to reach the group site. Such actions would result in minor ground disturbances but would not change topography. Thus, the proposed action would not adversely affect floodplain values.

### 5.2 Threatened and Endangered Species and Critical Habitat

Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 directs federal agencies to utilize their authorities in furtherance of the purposes of the Act by carrying out programs for the conservation of listed species or designated critical habitats. The USFWS is the agency that regulates compliance with the ESA. Furthermore, migratory birds are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. Any activity that results in the take of migratory birds or eagles is prohibited unless authorized by the USFWS. There are no provisions for allowing the take of migratory birds that are unintentionally killed or injured. Any person or organization who plans or conducts activities that may result in the take of migratory birds is responsible for complying with the appropriate regulations and implementing appropriate conservation measures.

A review on October 26, 2016, of the Threatened and Endangered Species (T&E) List by the USFWS indicated there are 19 animal species and 3 plant species found within Louisiana. A review of the USFWS Information for Planning and Conservation website (https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/) accessed on October 26, 2016, indicated that the range of 25 migratory birds and 4 T&E species overlaps this part of Louisiana. However, the proposed housing site does not contain critical habitat for any of these listed species. With regards to the migratory birds, the project site was cleared of most trees many years ago and is now primarily used as a hay field.

**Alternative 1- No Action Alternative**

Under the No Action alternative, the proposed group site would continue to be utilized as a hay field. Federal or State listed species are not known to occur on the proposed site. Any use of the site by these species would be rare since there isn't sufficient habitat and area to support these species. Thus, there would be no short- or long-term impacts to threatened and endangered species or critical habitat.

**Alternative 2 - Develop the Walker Corbin Group Site with MHUs (Proposed action)**

Based on the reviews conducted above and the site visits, the proposed group site does not contain suitable habitat for any Federal or State listed species. Any use of the group site by any of these species would be rare and temporary at best. And, since no designated critical habitats are found within the proposed group site, no occurrence of T&E species is expected. Therefore, FEMA has made the determination that the proposed action alternative would have no effect on federal or state listed species and would not adversely modify any critical habitat.

### 5.3 Cultural Resources

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. §470 *et seq.*) and it's implementing regulations (36 Code of Federal Regulations Part 800), require federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties.

**Alternative 1- No Action Alternative**

Under the No Action alternative, the proposed site would continue to be utilized as a heavy commercial site. Ground disturbance activities have been conducted in the past by the various

landowners. During this time, no evidence of cultural resources were reported to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Thus, there would be no short- or long-term impacts to cultural resources.

**Alternative 2 - Develop the Walker Corbin Group Site with MHUs (Proposed action)**

FEMA has defined the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the proposed undertaking as the maximum horizontal and vertical limits of excavation and construction, as well as all areas of ground disturbance, utility installation, clearing and grubbing, and staging or equipment operation. Based on a review of the Louisiana Cultural Resources Mapper and site reconnaissance, FEMA has determined that the APE does not include any above or below ground historic properties listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. SHPO concurrence with this determination was received dated November 10, 2016. The coordination letter with SHPO concurrence (on page 3) is provided at Attachment 1.

The contractor would monitor ground-disturbing activities during construction, and if any potential archeological resources are discovered, would immediately cease construction in that area and notify the Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, and FEMA.

### 5.4 Socioeconomic Resources

The project site is located in Livingston Parish, Louisiana. According to the United States Census Bureau Census, the population as of July 1, 2015 was 137,788 with a total of 52,104 housing units. The median household income was estimated at approximately $57,478 (based on 2010 -2014 American Survey 5-year Estimates). According to the 2010 -2014 American Survey 5-year Estimates, approximately 13.7% of population lives below poverty levels.

According to the United States 2010 Census Bureau, the population in the Town of Walker, where the project site is proposed, was 3,817 with a total of 1,563 housing units. With the establishment of the site, up to 400 residents could be temporarily relocated to the Walker Corbin Group Site (100 units x estimated 4 people per unit). The potential site residents will be from within the Parish areas which have been impacted by the flooding. The local community is aware of this action and may experience a slight localized increase in the need for public services, such as schools, fire and police services, childcare, and medical services. However, the overall demand for public and commercial services is not expected to be greater than the pre-disaster demand and potential impacts are expected to be minimal.

#### 5.4.1 Environmental Justice

**Alternative 1- No Action Alternative**

The No Action alternative would preclude FEMA from adequately addressing the urgency of providing temporary emergency housing. Consequently, displaced residents would have to remain in the temporary housing they have acquired through their own resources and possibly far from their original home. The short- and long-term recovery of displaced residents and their communities would be further compounded by fewer housing options. They would continue to experience social and economic stresses related to the disaster recovery.

**Alternative 2 - Develop the Walker Corbin Group Site with MHUs (Proposed action)**

The availability of federal assistance, including temporary housing for displaced residents, is consistent with EO 12898. All forms of FEMA disaster housing assistance are available to any affected household that meets the conditions of eligibility. Demographics are not among the eligibility requirements. The MHU sites are a temporary housing solution and would be installed in the proposed sites for 18 months; therefore, long-term adverse effects to public health or to the environment would not be expected.

The specific demographics of group site occupants are not available at this time because specific individuals or families are in the process of being identified for this site. However, the demographic makeup of the group site residents is expected to be similar to the community as a whole. Further, the availability of temporary housing would result in a positive impact to displaced individuals, regardless of whether they are minority and/or low income. Therefore, the proposed action would not pose disproportionately high and adverse public health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations.

With the establishment of the site, up to 400 residents could be temporarily relocated to the Walker Corbin Group Site. The potential site residents would be from areas which have been impacted by the flooding. The local community is aware of this action and may experience a slight localized increase in the need for public services, such as schools, fire and police services, childcare, and medical services. Some localized changes to traffic patterns would be expected. However, the overall demand for public and commercial services, and changes to traffic patterns is not expected to be greater than the pre-disaster demand and patterns. Thus, the overall short- and long-term potential impacts to environmental justice are expected to positive.

### 5.4.2 Hazardous Materials

Two of the main federal laws that address hazardous and toxic materials issues are CERCLA and RCRA. CERCLA, commonly known as Superfund, has the major objectives to identify hazardous and toxic material sites, determine liability, and oversee the cleanup. RCRA addresses the handling, disposal and recycling of debris and solid waste, including hazardous materials.

A review of the Environmental Data Resources Radius Map Report with GeoCheck dated November 4, 2016, indicated there are no facilities or activities of concern on the proposed group site. However, this database identified one hurricane debris landfill within 0.5 mile of the project site, one remediation action (type not stated) within 0.5 mile of the site, and one gas station within 0.25 mile of the site. The debris landfill is in operation, the remediation action has not been reported as closed, and the gas station had 3 Underground Storage Tanks removed in the past and new tanks installed. There were no business identified within 0.25 mile of the site as being RCRA Small Quantity Generators, Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generators, or RCRA NonGenerators meaning they once were Hazardous Waste Generators but not any longer.

**Alternative 1- No Action Alternative**

No impacts from hazardous materials are expected as a result of the No Action alternative.

**Alternative 2 - Develop the Walker Corbin Group Site with MHUs (Proposed action)**

Under the proposed action alternative, any abandoned equipment, debris, or other materials found on site would be disposed of prior to occupancy in an approved manner and location. In the event significant items (or evidence thereof) are discovered during construction activities, the contractor would handle, manage, and dispose of petroleum products, hazardous materials, and toxic waste in accordance with the requirements and to the satisfaction of the governing local, state, and federal agencies.

Based on the results of the Environmental Data Resources Radius Map Report database, the businesses identified do not present a short- or long-term risk to the environment at the proposed group site. Therefore, no impacts from hazardous materials or substances are expected with the proposed action.

## 6. Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are defined as environmental effects that are greater in magnitude, extent, or duration than the direct and indirect effects of the proposed FEMA-associated action when combined with the effects of other current and future actions, regardless of the proponent. Given the proposed action is temporary, short-term (up to 18 months) cumulative affects to the area surrounding the site as a result of site development and occupancy are not anticipated. Also, after the 18 months have ended, FEMA would remove all MHUs and return the site to pre-group site conditions to the extent possible or in accordance with lease terms with the landowner.

## 7. Public Involvement

Public involvement is being performed in compliance with NEPA, FEMA's Instruction 108-1-1 for implementing NEPA, and Executive Orders 12898, 11988, and 11990. A Notice of Availability of the Draft EA will be published in the local newspaper of record, the Livingston Parish News, and on FEMA's website at (https://www.fema.gov/library) requesting public comments. Additionally, the Draft EA will be made available for review at the Livingston Parish Office of Homeland Security and Security Preparedness, 20355 Government Blvd. Suite D, 2nd floor, Livingston, LA 70754. Due to the emergency nature of this action, the public comment period will be limited to 3 days. FEMA will consider and respond to all public comments in the Final EA. If no substantive comments are received, the Draft EA will become final and a FONSI will be issued for the project.

## 8. Mitigation

The following conditions must be met as part of this project. Failure to comply with these conditions may jeopardize the receipt of federal funding.

1. Appropriate BMP will be implemented during site development to minimize sediment migration from the site into nearby water bodies. Surface runoff will be controlled by using siltation controls such as silt fencing around the construction site to minimize erosion of materials into adjacent wetlands and/or waterways. Any disturbed soil will be protected with seed or sod after construction in order to decrease the amount of soil eroded by rainfall and runoff. Any fill stored on site will be appropriately covered to prevent erosion.

2. In order to control storm water runoff, the contractor will be required to design and construct drainage features so that flows will not cause nuisance flooding during heavy rainfall events. The drainage system will be required to meet local and county requirements
3. The contractor will monitor ground-disturbing activities during construction, and if any potential archeological resources are discovered, will immediately cease construction in that area and notify the Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, and FEMA.
4. Unusable equipment, debris and material will be disposed of prior to occupancy in an approved manner and location. In the event significant items (or evidence thereof) are discovered during implementation of the project, the contractor will handle, manage, and dispose of petroleum products, hazardous materials, and toxic waste in accordance to the requirements and to the satisfaction of the governing local, state, and federal agencies.
5. To minimize dust, site soils will be wetted during site preparation activities and seeded following construction.
6. To reduce construction noise impacts to any adjacent sensitive noise receptors, construction activities with elevated noise levels will be limited from 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M., unless otherwise approved by the Parish. Equipment and machinery used during construction will meet all local, State, and federal noise regulations.
7. The contractor will post appropriate signage and fencing to minimize potential adverse public safety concerns. Appropriate signage and barriers will be in place prior to construction activities in order to alert pedestrians and motorists of project activities and traffic pattern changes.
8. Once the temporary housing need has ended, the site will be seeded and restored to previous conditions to the extent practical or in accordance with site lease terms.

## 9. List of Preparers

EA Preparers: Kenneth R. Sims, NEPA Team Lead, USACE; Thomas A. Lightcap, NEPA Specialist, USACE.

Field Team: Steve Robinson, Environmental Specialist, USACE; Richard Beatty, Environmental Specialist, FEMA Reservist.

Reviewers: Kevin Jaynes, Regional Environmental Officer, FEMA; Adam Borden, Deputy Environmental Advisor, FEMA; Alan Hermely, Environmental Specialist, FEMA.

Table 1: Summary Table—Affected Environment, Impacts, and Mitigation

| Resource Area | No Action Alternative | Alternative 2 Proposed action: Develop the Walker Corbin Group Site with MHUs | Mitigation | Agency Coordination/ Permits |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Water Quality | No change from current conditions. | There is potential for localized increase in runoff and sediment and turbidity transport as a result of site preparation activities. Potential temporary impact to water quality in ditches and streams. | MHUs would not be placed in wetlands or waters of the United States. Appropriate BMP would be implemented during site development to minimize sediment migration from the site into waters of the United States. Surface runoff would be controlled by using siltation controls such as silt fencing around the construction site to minimize erosion of materials into adjacent wetlands and/or waterways. Any disturbed soil would be protected with seed or sod after construction in order to decrease the amount of soil eroded by rainfall and runoff. The contractor would appropriately cover any fill stored on the site to prevent erosion. In order to control storm water runoff, the contractor would design and construct drainage features so that flows would not cause nuisance flooding during heavy rainfall events. The drainage system will be required to meet local and county requirements. These actions would prevent any degradation of water quality as a result of silt-laden runoff from the construction site. The proposed action alternative would have no significant impacts to water quality in the area of the site. | Applicant must coordinate with the LDEQ and obtain required permits prior to initiating work.<br><br>All coordination pertaining to these activities and applicant compliance with any conditions would be documented and copies forwarded to the state and FEMA for inclusion in the permanent project files. |
| Wetlands | No change from current conditions. | None, design would avoid wetlands | No MHUs would be installed on the Project site where wetlands occur. | None |

| Resource Area | No Action Alternative | Alternative 2 Proposed action: Develop the Walker Corbin Group Site with MHUs | Mitigation | Agency Coordination/ Permits |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Floodplains | No change from current conditions. | No MHU would be installed within the 100-year floodplain. | No MHUs would be installed within the 100-year floodplain. | None |
| Threatened and Endangered Species and Critical Habitat | No change from current conditions. | No Threatened and Endangered Species and Critical Habitat on the proposed Site. | None. | None |
| Cultural Resources | No change from current conditions. | FEMA has determined that there would be no historical properties affected as a result of the proposed action. The SHPO concurred with this determination on November 10, 2016. | The contractor would monitor ground disturbance and if any potential archeological resources are discovered, would immediately cease construction in that area and notify the Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, and FEMA. | FEMA has consulted with SHPO and obtained concurrence on November 10, 2016 |
| Environmental Justice | No change from current conditions. | The proposed action would not pose disproportionately high and adverse public health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations. | To reduce construction noise impacts to any adjacent sensitive noise receptors, construction activities with elevated noise levels will be limited from 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M., unless otherwise approved by the Parish. Equipment and machinery used during construction will meet all local, State, and federal noise regulations. | None |

| Resource Area | No Action Alternative | Alternative 2 Proposed action: Develop the Walker Corbin Group Site with MHUs | Mitigation | Agency Coordination/ Permits |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hazardous Materials | No change from current conditions. | Under the proposed action, there are no anticipated impacts from hazardous materials and hazardous substances. | Unusable equipment, debris, and material would be disposed of prior to occupancy in an approved manner and location. In the event significant items (or evidence thereof) are discovered during implementation of the project, the contractor would handle, manage, and dispose of petroleum products, hazardous materials, and toxic waste in accordance to the requirements and to the satisfaction of the governing local, state, and federal agencies. | None |

**U.S. Department of Homeland Security**
Federal Emergency Management Agency
FEMA-4277-DR-LA
Joint Field Office
415 North 15th Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

November 7, 2016

Mr. Phillip E. Boggan II
State Historic Preservation Officer
Department of Culture, Recreation & Tourism
P.O. Box 44247
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Dear Mr. Boggan,

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in response to the Presidentially declared Major Disaster Declaration FEMA-DR-4277-LA (Incident Period- August 11, 2016 to August 31, 2016) will be providing direct temporary housing assistance, or "direct assistance," under the Individuals and Households Program, Sections 408 and 502 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, P.L. 93-288, as amended. Per 44 CFR Part 206, FEMA is authorized to provide temporary housing units directly to individuals and households who, because of a lack of available resources, are unable to make use of rental assistance for temporary housing.

As per the Programmatic Agreement among FEMA, the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officer, the Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas, the Caddo Nation, the Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, the Jena Band of Choctaw Indians, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, the Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma, the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, the Seminole Tribe of Florida, the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, executed August 17, 2009, and amended on July 22, 2011 (2009 Statewide PA as amended) ground-disturbing activities related to the construction of temporary housing sites are not included in the temporary housing activities included in Section 408: Federal Assistance to Individuals and Households (42 U.S.C. 5174) for which FEMA has no further Section 106 responsibilities per Stipulation I.C.1. of the 2009 Statewide PA as amended.

FEMA is initiating consultation for the proposed temporary housing locations, to be used to house individuals and families whose homes were rendered uninhabitable as a result of DR-4277.

Manufactured Housing Units (MHU's) are provided to eligible applicants in parishes only as a last resort when no other reasonable alternative exists for emergency housing. These actions may include placing sets of MHU's at newly developed "Group Sites" located in impacted parishes. Group Sites are only approved when setting individual MHU's on private property, or utilizing a previously developed commercial site are not available options. Livingston Parish has been identified as eligible for the installation of "Group Sites".

## Project Description

For group housing sites, cleared, level locations within close proximity to affected communities are generally selected for consideration. Sites are generally leveled and prepared for the installation of both the MHU's and associated utilities. The MHU's being used for the DR-4277 disaster are different from the housing units used in other Louisiana federal disaster declarations. All units are constructed in accordance to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and FEMA standards, which enhance frame requirements, thermal protection, plumbing and fire safety. All units have smoke detectors, weather radios, and fire extinguishers. MHU's range from one to three bedrooms depended on the size of the occupying family.

The proposed Walker Corbin group housing site is rectangular in shape and sits to the southeast of the intersection of Florida Boulevard and North Corbin Road in Walker, LA. The site comprises approximately 33 acres of relatively flat, previously cleared, pasture land. The property is largely bounded along the east and south by dense woodlands and brush and to the west by a drainage ditch and an industrial park of light manufacturing entities. The site is bounded on the north by Florida Blvd. A narrow ditch runs east to west along a slight diagonal across the property. Approximately 16 acres of the 33 acre site appears to be mowed periodically. The southern portion of the parcel, which encompasses approximately 17 acres, is not mowed as frequently. The likely access point for the housing site would be along Florida Blvd.

## Area of Potential Effect

36 CFR § 800.4 requires federal agencies to define the Area of Potential Effect (APE). The summarized project location, with dimensions of disturbance, are provided below and attached maps defines limits of the APE associated with this undertaking.

**Table 1**- Proposed Group Site Housing Location, Livingston Parish.

| Location | Northwest Corner | Northeast Corner | Southeast Corner | Southwest Corner |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Walker Corbin | 30.498140, -90.837340 | 30.498667, -90.835495 | 30.492295, -90.837060 | 30.492376, -90.835034 |

In addition, the APE for this project will include the ground disturbance necessary to tie the new sewer facilities at the site into existing sewer facilities. This most likely path of the new sewer line would be to the west, toward an existing light industrial complex, where the line could be tied into an existing manhole (see Map 1 for details).

## Identification of Historic Properties

36 CFR 800.4(b) (1) of these regulations states that federal agency officials shall make a "reasonable and good faith effort" to identify historic properties.

FEMA conducted research using the Louisiana Division of Archaeology's Cultural Resource database and associated site files, photographs, and maps to identify historic properties within the vicinity of the APE. The Walker Corbin location lies group housing site is within the boundaries of two (2) previously conducted surveys: report 22-3974 is a reconnaissance level Phase 1 survey from 2012 titled "Cultural Resources Avoidance Plan for Proposed South Lockhart 3-D Seismic Exploration Survey, Livingston Parish, Louisiana," which was prepared by SURA; and 22-1467 is a reconnaissance level Phase 1 survey from 1990 titled "Literature Search and Research Design Amite River and Tributaries Project Ascension, East Baton Rouge, and Livingston Parishes, Louisiana,"

which was prepared by R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, Inc. There are no known archaeological or historic sites within the vicinity of the Walker Corbin location.

**Findings of Effect**

Based on information gathered through this review process, FEMA has made a determination of **No Potential to Affect Historic Properties** as a result of the proposed undertaking.

To ensure that FEMA-funded activities would not affect significant archaeological resources, FEMA would place the following conditions on the project for the treatment of unexpected archaeological discoveries during the installation of temporary MHUs:

> *In the event that human remains or intact archaeological deposits are discovered, work in the vicinity of the discovery will stop immediately and all reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm to the finds will be taken. The applicant will ensure that archaeological discoveries are secured in place, that access to the sensitive area is restricted, and that all reasonable measures are taken to avoid further disturbance of the discoveries. The applicant's contractor will provide immediate notice of such discoveries to the applicant. The applicant will notify the Louisiana Office of Cultural Development and FEMA within 24 hours of the discovery. Work in the vicinity of the discovery may not resume until FEMA has completed consultation with SHPO, Tribes, and other consulting parties as necessary. In the event that unmarked human remains are encountered during permitted activities, all work shall stop immediately and the proper authorities notified in accordance with Louisiana Code.*

Thank you very much for your assistance with this request. Due to the urgent need to provide safe housing to those affected by the disaster, your prompt attention to this matter would be greatly appreciated. Should you have any questions or need to discuss the proposed activities in greater detail, you may contact Andria Darby, Historic Preservation Specialist at Andria.Darby@fema.dhs.gov or 413-329-1860. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Adam Borden
Environmental & Historic Preservation Advisor
FEMA-4277-DR-LA

No known historic properties will be affected by this undertaking. Therefore, our office has no objection to the implementation of this project. This effect determination could change should new information come to our attention.

Phil Boggan
State Historic Preservation Officer

Date

11/10/2016

Figure 1 - Walker Corbin Group Site; Site Map

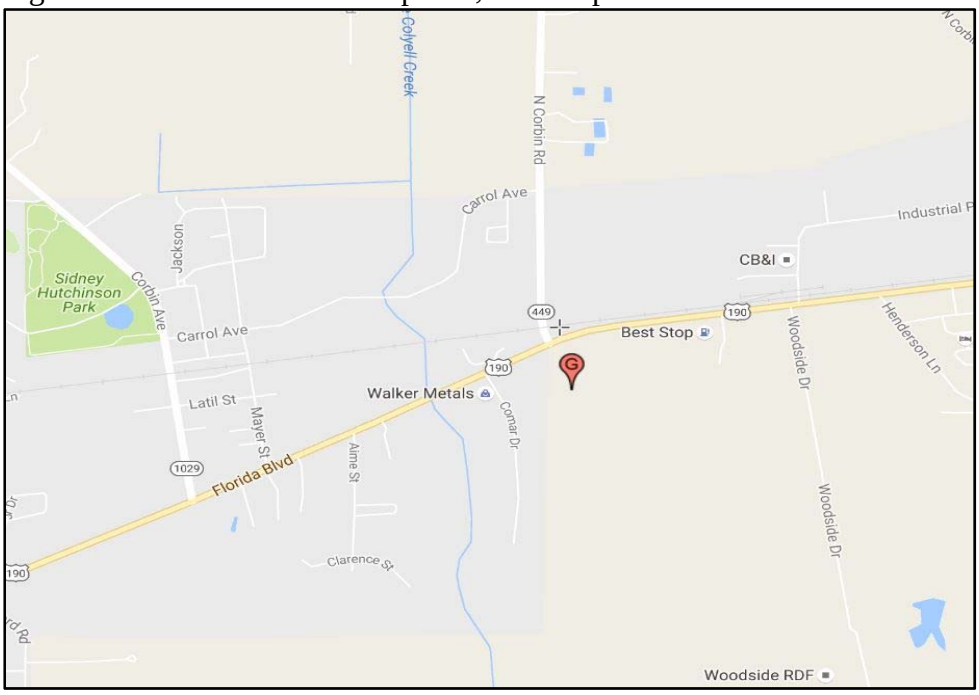


Figure 2 - Walker Corbin Group Site; Aerial Photograph and Coordinates

Figure 3 - Walker Corbin Group Site; Center of Hay Field Looking North

Figure 4 - Walker Corbin Group Site; Hay Field Looking from Southeast to Northwest (Note Mowed Wetland Area is Located Along the Right Edge and into the Center of the Photograph)

Figure 5 – Walker Corbin Group Site; Center of Hay Field with Drainage Swale Looking South (Note Unmowed Area in the Background Begins at Ditch That is Waters of the United States)

Figure 6 - Walker Corbin Group Site; Ditch Determined to be Waters of the United States, looking west to east (Note Fallow Area to the South)

Figure 7 - Walker Corbin Group Site; West Border Showing Relationship to the Industrial Park Located Just West of the Site (Note Drainage Ditch)

Figure 8 - Walker Corbin Group Site; Unmowed Area Looking from South to North Along the West Edge

Figure 9 – Walker Corbin Group Site; Wetland area in the SE Corner Looking South to North

Figure 10 - Walker Corbin Group Site; Unmowed Area Looking East to West

Figure 11 - Walker Corbin Group Site; Conceptual Site Layout

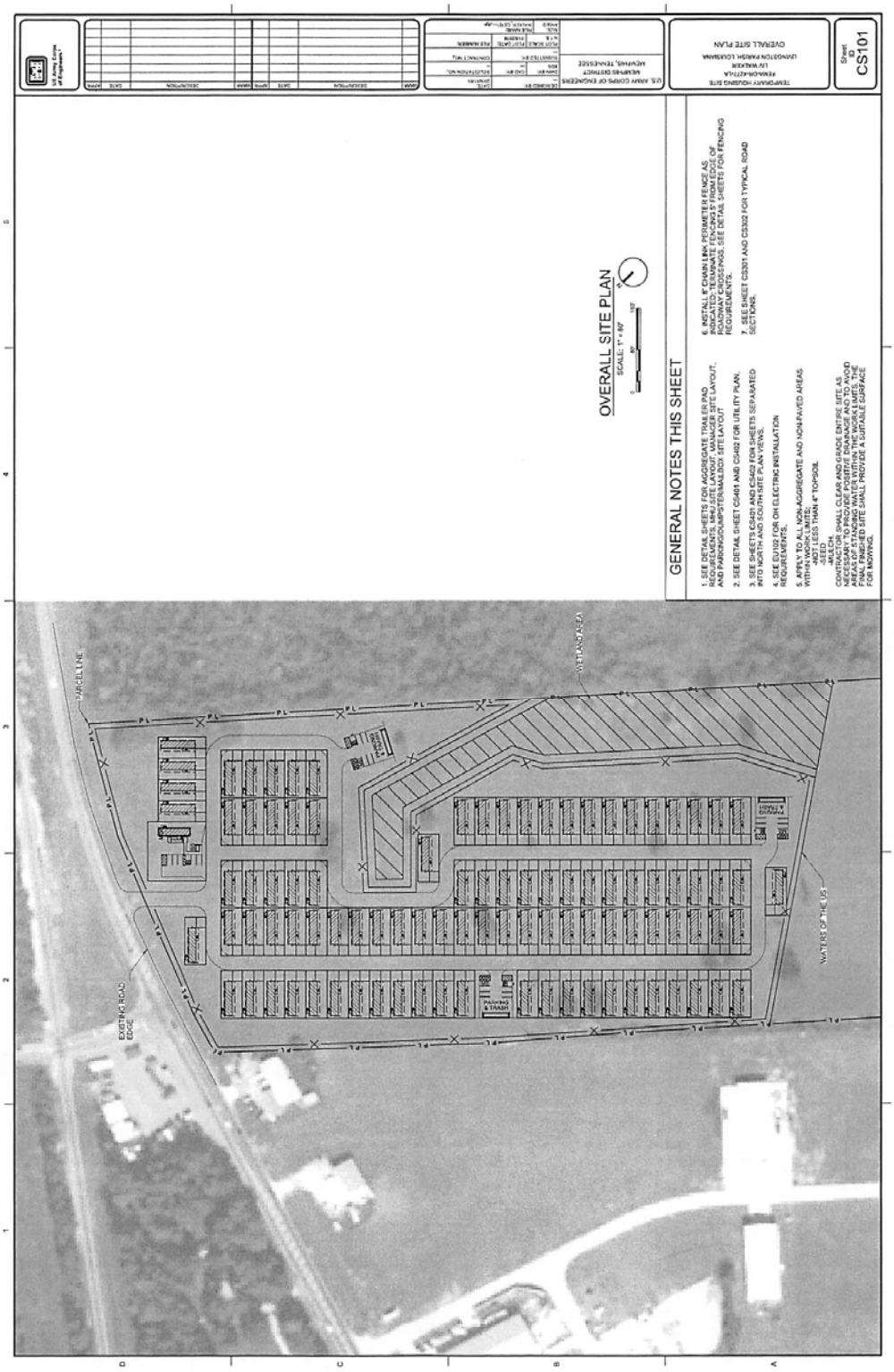

Figure 12 – Walker Corbin Group Site; Map of Preliminary Jurisdictional Determination of Wetlands and Waters of the United States

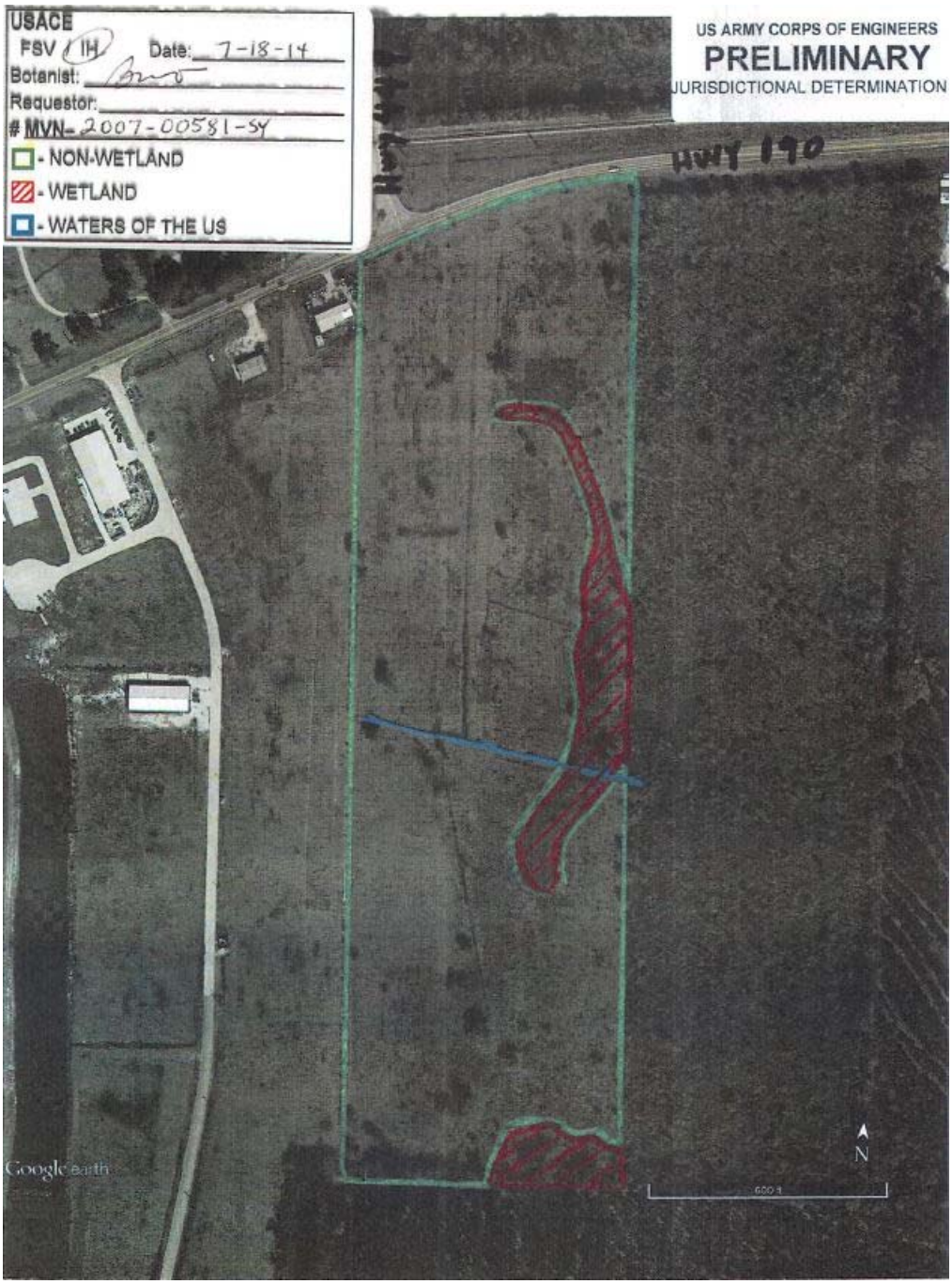

Figure 13 – Walker Corbin Group Site Floodplain Map; 100-year Floodplain, Zone AE, Shown as Blue; 500-year Floodplain Shown as Brown; and Zone X Shown as Gray