Environmental Assessment

Lobdell Lane Bridge Replacement Project
Town of Elizabethtown, Essex County, New York

FEMA 4020-DR-NY

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FEMA

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Region II, 26 Federal Plaza, NY, NY 10278

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AMSL	Above Mean Sea Level
ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
APA	Adirondack Park Agency
APE	Area of Potential Effect
BMP	Best Management Practices
CAA	Clean Air Act
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CRIS	Cultural Resources Information System
CWA	Clean Water Act
DBH	Diameter at Breast Height
EA	Environmental Assessment
ECL	Environmental Conservation Law
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EJ	Environmental Justice
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
EO	Executive Order
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FT	Feet
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NYS	New York State
NYSBC	New York State Building Code
NYSDEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
NYSDHSES	New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services
NYSEC	New York State Energy Code
NYSECL	New York State Environmental Conservation Law
NYSOPRHP	New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PA	Public Assistance
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
SEQRA	State Environmental Quality Review Act

SF	Square Foot
SFHA	Special Flood Hazard Area
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SPDES	State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
SPL	Sound Pressure Level
SWPPP	Storm water Pollution Prevention Plan
TRI	Toxics Release Inventory
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey

1. Introduction

The Essex County Department of Public Works, herein referred to as the "Subrecipient," has requested financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security - Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Hurricane Irene impacted New York August 26 to September 5, 2011, and was declared a major disaster by President Barack H. Obama on August 31, 2011 (FEMA 4020-DR-NY) and subsequently amended. Federal public assistance was made available to affected communities and non-profit organizations in accordance with the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5172 et seq.), as amended. The New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (NYSDHSES) is the Recipient partner for the proposed action.

FEMA is required as a Federal agency to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of its proposed actions, and alternatives to proposed actions, in order to make an informed decision in defining a proposed project for implementation. FEMA must consider and incorporate, to the extent practicable, measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse impacts to the human environment. The environmental analysis is conducted in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and its implementing regulations at 40 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) Parts 1500-1508, FEMA Directive 108-1 and FEMA Instruction 108-1-1. This Environmental Assessment (EA) serves as documentation of FEMA's analysis of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed replacement of Lobdell Bridge, including analysis of project alternatives, and identification of impact minimization measures. The document serves as written communication of the environmental evaluation for public and interested party comment. Public involvement is a component of NEPA to inform an agency's determination of whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

2. Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Public Assistance Grant Program is to provide assistance to State, Tribal, and local governments and certain types of private nonprofit organizations so that communities can quickly respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies. The purpose of the proposed project is to provide safe crossing of the Boquet River and minimize future damage to the structure. The need is the result of flood damage to the single span, single lane, steel girder bridge. Although residents currently have access to Lobdell Lane, the existing bridge is temporary and is not meant for permanent use.

3. Background Information

As a result of Hurricane Irene, the Subrecipient suffered total loss of the 21½ ft wide x 42 ft long steel multi-girder and timber decked bridge carrying Lobdell Lane over the Boquet River. Lobdell Lane is a dead end road that runs from US Route 9 to the southeast. Record floodwaters scoured the stone and cast-in-place abutment and support footings at the stream channel, resulting in bridge failure. The Lobdell Lane Bridge was constructed in 1975 and consisted of steel deck, girders, sheet pile wingwalls, and stone and cast-in-place abutments. The bridge serves as the only access across the Boquet River for four (4) residences. The sheet pile wingwalls were 25 ft high x 38 ft long and installed diagonally from the cast-in-place abutment. This served as lateral support for

the bridge roadway. Each bridge abutment has considerable height and width and the site topography of the approaches required a monolithic cast-in-place structure at the east side. At the west abutment, the sheet pile wall served to retain soils and lateral support for the roadway. The east abutment measures approximately 36 ft high x 24 ft wide x 5.67 ft thick with cast-in-place concrete and laid-up stone elements. The west cast-in-place abutment measures approximately 36 ft high x 24 ft wide x 5 ft thick. Each of these substructures are placed on substantial cast-in-place footings. A temporary Mabey bridge was placed on temporary concrete caissons and timber crib abutments placed behind the existing bridge abutments following the bridge failure soon after the disaster which has been previously reviewed by FEMA as emergency work.

4. Alternatives

NEPA requires the analysis of reasonable alternatives as part of the environmental review process for the proposed project. Inclusion of a No Action Alternative in the environmental analysis and documentation is required under NEPA. The No Action Alternative is used to evaluate the effects of not providing Federal financial assistance for the project, thus providing a "without project" benchmark against which "action alternatives" may be evaluated. In developing alternatives to the proposed project, the Subrecipient identified the following as project objectives in addition to basic purpose and need: cost effective construction, minimize maintenance, avoid disturbances to natural environment, optimize the use of public funds, and eliminate future threats to public health and safety.

4.1 Alternatives Considered in this EA

Two viable action alternatives were developed for the replacement of the Lobdell Lane Bridge. A third alternative was dismissed as described further below. The three alternatives considered in this EA are as follows:

- No Action Alternative (4.1.1)
- Alternative I – Replacement: Existing Alignment (4.1.2)
- Alternative II – Replacement: Relocated North (4.1.3)

4.1.1 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not provide any Federal funding to the project and the temporary bridge would remain in place. The temporary bridge is not designed for long-term permanent use; therefore, leaving the temporary bridge in place would not assure travelers of the Lobdell Lane Bridge safe and permanent access across the Boquet River. The No Action Alternative would not address the proposed project's purpose and need.

4.1.2 Alternative I – Replacement: Existing Alignment

Under Alternative I, the Subrecipient's proposed alternative, the Subrecipient would construct a permanent bridge at the existing alignment with a wider span than the existing bridge (see Appendix A for plans). This bridge would be a permanent single lane steel truss bridge with concrete deck. The bridge abutments would be cast-in-place concrete structures with either pile-supported or spread footings, as recommended by the geotechnical engineer, and would include wingwalls to contain the fill soils at the ends of the approach roadway embankments. The proposed clear waterway opening is 87 feet, while the existing bridge span is 38.5 feet.

The west streambank would be reconstructed to move the center of the stream channel to the center of the new bridge span. Steel sheet pile scour protection would be provided at the west abutment and wingwalls. The west streambank would be armored with heavy stone riprap over geotextile fabric to prevent erosion of this outside bank of the river curve and possible embankment failure at the east shoulder of adjacent US Route 9. The existing east abutment would be removed from the stream channel, and the east streambank would be regraded to maintain the required channel width and to center the channel in the new bridge opening. The east abutment would be installed beyond the limits of an approximately 16 foot wide overbank shelf, creating a separation between the top of the normal channel bank and the substructure.

The approach roadway at the west end of the permanent bridge would be asphalt paved to transition to the pavement along the east shoulder of US Route 9 in accordance with NYSDOT requirements. The east approach roadway would be restored to the gravel-paved roadway section matching the original Lobdell Lane horizontal alignment. All approach road embankments and the bridge abutments would attempt to avoid wetland areas to the extent possible. Highway guiderails conforming to current standards would be provided at both approach roadways. See Appendix A for project plans.

In order to carry out the permanent fix described above a temporary bridge and detour would be needed during construction. The temporary bridge would be a single-lane pre-fabricated steel truss bridge. Temporary stone-filled timber crib abutments with concrete bearing pads below the bridge bearings would be provided near the top of the existing streambanks. The temporary abutments are proposed to be placed with an approximate 129 foot span, which is 1.9 times the stream channel width of 68 feet.

The west approach roadway to the existing temporary bridge abuts the existing east shoulder of US Route 9. A temporary lane shift to the west for both lanes of US Route 9, designed in accordance with New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) requirements, would be required to provide adequate turning radii for traffic entering and leaving the temporary roadway during construction. The lane shift would be discontinued and the traffic lanes would be restored to the existing alignment on US Route 9 upon completion of the permanent replacement bridge. A temporary detour roadway would be constructed on the east side of the temporary bridge to direct traffic back onto the original Lobdell Lane alignment. The temporary detour road would include the extension of the existing corrugated metal pipe (CMP) drainage culverts at the east approach embankment through the temporary detour road to maintain existing drainage facilities during construction. The temporary bridge approach road embankments would avoid wetland areas to the extent possible. Upon completion of the new permanent bridge, all temporary approach road embankments, culvert extensions, temporary abutments, and the temporary bridge superstructure would be removed and the disturbed areas would be either re-seeded or covered with riprap. All work for both the permanent and temporary bridges would be subject to all applicable permitting.

4.1.3 Alternative II – Replacement: Relocated North

Alternative II consists of relocating the bridge approximately 385 feet northeast. This alternative was initially pursued as the location would significantly improve the sight distance of vehicles and would use the existing temporary bridge during construction. However, this alternative was dismissed due to concerns from landowners. In order to implement this alternative, eminent

domain proceedings would be required. Conceptual plans for Alternative II are included in Appendix B for reference.

5. Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

Table 1 (Appendix C) summarizes potential impacts of the No Action Alternative and Alternative I. The following sections provide a more detailed description of the affected environment and potential environmental and cultural impacts of the two alternatives.

5.1 Topography, Soils, and Geology

5.1.1 Existing Conditions

Topography

The proposed project is located along the Boquet River in the Town of Elizabethtown and along the eastern extent of the Adirondack Mountains. Elevations in the project vicinity range from 545 ft to 565 ft above sea level. The Boquet River flows to the northeast at the project area, and is seven (7) miles to the northeast of the confluence of the north and south fork of the Boquet River, and 14 miles to the southeast of the confluence of the two branches of the Boquet River.

Soils

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) operates the Web Soil Survey, which includes the soils of Essex County. The Web Soil Survey maps show soils in the vicinity of the site as being composed of a wide array of soil types and slope characteristics including the following: Adams loamy sand, 3-8% slopes (AdB); Fluvaquents-Udifluvents complex, frequently flooded and nearly level (FuA); Lovewell very fine sandy loam, 0-3% slopes (LvA); Ondawa sandy loam, 0-3% slopes (OwA); and Podunk very fine sandy loam, 0-3% slopes (PoA). Proposed construction would primarily affect areas mapped as AdB, FuA, and LuA. See Appendix D for the soils report.

The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) requires Federal agencies to minimize the extent to which Federal programs contribute to the unnecessary conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use and to assess potential conversion of farmland to developed property. The AdB soils are considered Farmland of Statewide Importance. The LvA, OwA, and PoA soils are considered Prime Farmland.

Geology

Executive Order 12699 requires Federal agencies assisting in the financing, through Federal grants or loans, or guaranteeing the financing, through loan or mortgage insurance programs, of newly constructed building to initiate measures to assure appropriate consideration of seismic safety (WBDG, 1990). The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Percent Peak Ground Acceleration Seismic Hazard Maps (USGS, 2008) adopted by the New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code (NYSUFPBC) indicate that the project site is located within a moderate seismic hazard area for potential damage. The only area in NYS that has a higher hazard is located to the north and east of the project site in the Central Adirondacks toward the Canadian border. Since seismic activity is so low within an area categorized as a moderate seismic hazard area, the construction of buildings or structures would not have to meet any higher standards. The bedrock under the proposed site is at a depth greater than five feet deep and may be as deep as 20 feet below the

surface. The site is mapped on the Geologic Map of New York (Adirondack Sheet, 1970) as Quaternary glacial and alluvial deposits with unknown underlying bedrock geology.

5.1.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative
The No Action Alternative would not impact topography, geology, or soils. The current temporary bridge would remain at its present location.

Alternative I: Existing Alignment
Alternative I would have minor impacts to the physical features of the project site, including ground disturbance during construction and establishment of a temporary access road for use during bridge construction. Some impacts to soils and topography (ground disturbance) during construction would occur from tree removal and grading at the project site. Since the project would be constructed in the same alignment as the original structure, minimal impacts to geology are expected from construction activities. Only temporary impacts would occur from the construction of the temporary bridge. Construction of bridge abutments, including any sheet piling, would have minimal impact on existing soils since the bridge would be constructed in the same alignment. Best management practices (BMPs) would be used to minimize erosion and control sediment, including use of filter fabric adjacent to all areas of soil disturbances to reduce transport of dislodged soils into nearby streams and seeding/mulching of disturbed soils to help establish a vegetative cover and stabilize disturbed areas. The area of disturbance would be approximately 55,000 sf and would require a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).

FEMA consulted with the USDA-NRCS and determined that the project is exempt from the FPPA provision. Although the project does include soils designated as being of statewide importance, the project is only impacting a small area that would be restored to its previous state after construction (see letter dated October 26, 2015 in Appendix E).

5.2 Land Use and Zoning

5.2.1 Existing Conditions
The existing site is located along the Boquet River, in the Boquet River watershed, in the Town of Elizabethtown, New York. The Boquet River watershed has an area of 275 square miles, and is a sub watershed of the much larger Lake Champlain watershed. The area is predominantly rural and there are residential properties on the northwest side of US Route 9 and also further down Lobdell Lane. Lobdell Lane provides sole access for four residences, three of which are year-round, and one is seasonal. There are two known businesses in the surrounding land, one that uses the bridge for access. The two businesses include a former commercial ski area now used to host musical concerts, and a Christmas tree farm.

The NYS Adirondack Park Agency (APA) is responsible for developing long-range land use plans for public and private lands, maintaining the protection of the forest preserve, and overseeing development proposals of privately owned lands within the Adirondack Park, which includes the project area. The APA determines permitting requirements based on the existing laws and regulations, including the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan Map (Appendix F). The APA has zoned this area for Moderate Intensity and Rural Use. See Appendix G, SEQRA Documents – Environmental Assessment Form for additional site details. The APA also regulates

shoreline development and tree clearing within the Park along rivers and streams that are navigable by boat or canoe.

5.2.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative
The No Action Alternative would not impact land use or local zoning. The temporary bridge alignment supports and is consistent with existing land use and zoning.

Alternative I: Existing Alignment
Since Alternative I would use the existing alignment, this alternative would not impact land use or local zoning. Minimal temporary impacts may arise through construction of the temporary bridge, access road, and detour.

5.3 Water Resources and Water Quality

Congress enacted the Federal Water Pollution Control Act in 1948, which was reorganized and expanded in 1972, and became known as the Clean Water Act (CWA) in 1977, as amended. The CWA regulates discharge of pollutants into water with sections falling under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Section 404 of the CWA establishes the USACE permit requirements for discharging dredged or fill materials into Waters of the United States and traditionally navigable waterways. The USACE regulates activities within navigable waters, as authorized under the 1899 Rivers and Harbors Act. Under National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), the EPA regulates both point and non-point pollutant sources, including stormwater. Activities that disturb one (1) acre of ground or more are required to apply for a State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit administered in NYS through the NYSDEC.

5.3.1 Existing Conditions

The project site is located along the Boquet River and within the Boquet River watershed. According to the Boquet River Association, the Boquet River originates on Dix Mountain in Keene, is 47 miles long, and discharges into Lake Champlain in Willsboro, NY. Major tributaries include the North Branch, the Branch, Spruce Mill Brook, and Lincoln Pond. The watershed is 280 square miles and includes the towns of Elizabethtown, Essex, Lewis, Westport, and Willsboro.

The Boquet River is classified as a Class C (T) stream. The “T” standard means that this stream’s highest and best use is to support trout. The NYSDEC regulates Class C (T) streams and requires permit applications for any disturbance to the stream. In certain circumstances, stream disturbance during the trout spawning season (November 1st – March 31st) may be restricted.

Portions of the Boquet River have been designated as scenic or recreational by NYSDEC under their Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Permit Program. At the project location, the river has been designated recreational. Development within areas with such designation may require additional permitting from NYSDEC. As noted above, the APA also has regulatory authority for streamside development and may require permits for construction projects along the river.

5.3.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative
The No Action Alternative would not impact water resources and water quality. The current temporary bridge would remain at its present location.

Alternative I: Existing Alignment
This alternative would reconstruct the bridge in the existing alignment, but with a larger span and therefore, improved hydraulic characteristics. No impact to surface water quality of the Boquet River would occur, as minimization and mitigation measures would be incorporated (as permit conditions) to avoid impacts to the natural environment, including any necessary conditions to avoid impacts to fish passage. This proposed alternative would actually have a positive impact on water resources and water quality, as the larger bridge span (i.e., larger opening) would lower stream velocity and decrease sediment transport.

The Subrecipient will apply for permits from NYSDEC and USACE as the project may require a NYS DEC Article 15 – Protection of Waters Permit and a USACE nationwide permit for excavation and fill of navigable waters. The disturbance will be controlled to prevent pollutants from entering water resources during the construction phase using BMPs appropriate to the location and work. A SWPPP is required and must be approved prior to construction, in accordance with the NYS stormwater SPDES General Permit for Construction Activities (GP-0-15-002). No impacts to groundwater quality are anticipated from this project. Additional permits may be required from the APA and NYSDEC for development that takes place along rivers in the Adirondack Park or along designated recreational rivers. Only preliminary discussion has occurred with permitting agencies. The permit applications have not been submitted as of the writing of this EA.

5.4 Wetlands

Executive Order (EO) 11990 “Wetlands Protection” requires that Federal agencies take actions to minimize the destruction, loss, or degradation of wetlands, and to preserve and enhance the beneficial effects of wetlands. Compliance with this EO is ensured through the process of identifying whether the action would be located within or would potentially affect federally regulated wetlands (USFWS 1977). Federal regulation of wetlands is under the jurisdiction of the USACE. Federal actions within wetlands require the Federal agency to conduct an Eight-Step Review Process. This process, like NEPA, requires the evaluation of alternatives prior to funding the action. FEMA’s regulations for conducting the Eight-Step Review process are contained in 44 CFR Part 9.5. The Eight-Step Review Process for this project can be found in Appendix H.

The wetland definition at 44 CFR 9.4 is broader than the three-parameter USACE approach to wetland delineation. Only one of the three parameters (wetland soils, wetland plants, or wetland hydrology) is required for an area to be defined as a wetland per FEMA’s regulation consistent with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Cowardin Classification System. Federal regulation of wetlands under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act is in the permit jurisdiction of USACE. NYSDEC regulates and protects freshwater wetlands at the state level as defined by NYS’ Environmental Conservation Law (NYSECL) Article 24. The APA uses the same wetland definitions as USFWS and also regulates and issues permits regarding work that may impact wetlands within the Adirondack Park.

5.4.1 Existing Conditions

According to NYSDEC's "Environmental Resource Mapper" website (http://www.dec.ny.gov/imsmaps/ERM/viewer.htm), there are no NYSDEC-regulated wetlands mapped at the site. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services' (USFWS) National Wetland Inventory (NWI) and APA GIS website do not identify any wetlands within the area of disturbance (Appendix I). However, there are freshwater forested/shrub wetlands mapped immediately upstream and downstream of the site.

5.4.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not impact wetlands. The current temporary bridge would remain at its present location.

Alternative I: Existing Alignment

Alternative I requires construction of both a permanent bridge and a temporary bridge with a temporary gravel roadway. SEQR documents indicate that there would be impacts to wetlands during construction and operation of the temporary roadway. The temporary roadway is proposed to be constructed adjacent to existing wetlands. Final design of the temporary and permanent road will take wetland locations into consideration and will attempt to avoid grading or filling within the wetland to the extent possible. BMPs such as silt fencing will be used to avoid impacts to the wetlands that may be caused by construction runoff, and the temporary road will be underlain with geotextile to facilitate restoration of the site following construction. The Subrecipient will apply for the necessary permits from NYSDEC, APA, and USACE and must comply with all permit conditions, including any wetland mitigation or restoration that may be required following regulatory agency review of site specific wetland delineation and final design documents.

5.5 Floodplains

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

5.5.1 Existing Conditions

According to the FIRM (Community-Panel Number 361388 0016 B, effective January 20, 1993; Appendix J) both alternatives are located in the 100-year flood plain. However, the bridge and roads would be constructed at an elevation higher than the 100-year floodplain.

The existing bridge, which has a 38-foot span, constricts the steam channel width for this reach of the river, which is approximately 68 feet wide. This results in high stream channel velocities in excess of 16 ft per second (ft/s) during the 100-year recurrence interval flood event at the existing bridge and immediately downstream from the structure. The average stream flow velocity for

unconstrained sections of the existing channel upstream and downstream from the structure was calculated to be approximately 6 ft/s for this flood event. Such high flow rates have caused significant erosion of the stream channel bottom below the existing bridge and the downstream streambanks. Erosion of supporting soils and undermining of the existing east abutment has occurred several times in the past. The Hurricane Irene flood event undermined the upstream corner of the east abutment, which resulted in a partial collapse of this structure.

5.5.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative
The No Action Alternative would leave the existing bridge in place and the bridge abutments would still have the potential to affect or be affected by the floodplain.

Alternative I: Existing Alignment
The bridge abutments would still have the potential to affect or be affected by the floodplain. However, FEMA anticipates that by locating the abutments farther back from the current location and increasing the clear span to 87 feet, this proposal will have a positive impact on the floodplain.

Removal of the existing bridge and installation of a new bridge in the same location as the existing structure spanning a reconstructed stream channel would result in significantly decreased stream velocities at and immediately downstream from the bridge location. The proposed clear waterway opening of approximately 87 ft, accompanied by the reconstructed stream channel, are intended to reduce flow velocities at the bridge location from approximately 16 ft/s (existing) to approximately 10 ft/s (proposed) for the 100-year recurrence interval event. The reconstructed stream channel, with flat benches and wetland plantings, would result in a minor decrease in channel velocities in the floodplain approximately 350 feet upstream and downstream of the bridge location of approximately 1 ft/s. The significant reduction in stream flow velocities at the proposed bridge location is expected to reduce scour from streamflow and resulting sediment transport to downstream reaches in the floodplain.

The abutments for the replacement bridge would still be within the boundaries of the 100-year floodplain. The west abutment would be protected from potential scour by the installation of steel sheet piling between the abutment/wingwalls and the river. The east abutment would be installed beyond the limits of an approximately 16 ft wide overbank shelf creating a separation between the top of the normal channel bank and the substructure. The east abutment footings would be either extended below the anticipated scour depth or may be supported on steel piles depending on the results of the geotechnical investigation.

While hydraulic modelling has not been undertaken for the proposed temporary bridge, its larger hydraulic opening would provide modest improvements to the natural hydrology of the site compared to the existing condition, even without channel and embankment work proposed for the permanent replacement bridge. The clear waterway opening between the temporary abutments is proposed to span approximately 129 ft, which is approximately 1.9 times the steam channel width of 68 ft, thereby exceeding the minimum required opening width of 1.25 times the channel width per NYSDEC and USACE requirements.

5.6 Vegetation

5.6.1 Existing Conditions

The project location is vegetated with a mix of hardwood and softwood forest typical of Adirondack foothills. Along the stream banks, the vegetation consists of wetland shrubs, tall grass, and trees. The majority of trees in the project area are saplings that are under 4" diameter at breast height (DBH), but several larger trees are also present. Any soil disturbances would require re-seeding to establish cover grasses to protect soils from erosion.

5.6.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative
The No Action Alternative would not impact vegetation since construction work would not occur.

Alternative I: Existing Alignment
Minor impact to vegetation is anticipated during the construction of the temporary bridge, temporary access road, and permanent bridge. An approximate 20,000-25,000 sf area would need to be cleared for the construction of this project. The Subrecipient estimates that 19 trees would be removed from the construction site that are of 4" DBH or greater. Any grasses located within the project sites would be replaced during restoration with seeding and mulching. The types and sizes of trees to be removed are listed below:

Type of Trees	Number of Trees	Avg. Dia.
Birch	3	8
Pine	1	4
Poplar	3	8
Hardwood*	12	8

*Actual species were not recorded during the survey.

5.7 Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat

5.7.1 Existing Conditions

The existing bridge spans the Boquet River. The undeveloped portions of the site consist of northern forest habitat, suitable for wildlife such as mammals, birds, amphibians, and reptiles typical of the region. The Boquet River is classified as a C (T) stream, indicating the highest and best use is to support trout. In addition, Federal agencies must evaluate potential impacts to migratory bird habitat per the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. There is no sensitive migratory bird habitat in the project area.

5.7.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative
The No Action Alternative would not impact habitat since there would be no further construction work.

Alternative I: Existing Alignment
Alternative I would not permanently impact wildlife in the area. Some populations may be displaced temporarily during construction, but ample habitat exists to accommodate any displaced

wildlife resources. It is estimated that approximately 20,000 sf to 25,000 sf of vegetation would be affected by the construction of the proposed bridge; much of the work is taking place within existing right-of-way. Although fish passage may be temporarily hindered during construction, the fish habitat of the stream would be improved in the long term by improvements to the stream bed and floodplain. In accordance with Migratory Bird Treaty Act, FEMA has determined that there would be no significant adverse impact to migratory bird habitat.

5.8 Threatened and Endangered Species and Critical Habitat

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

5.8.1 Existing Conditions

FEMA reviewed the USFWS's Endangered Species Program webpage and IPaC system to determine whether any Federally-threatened or endangered species were known to be located at or near the site (USFWS 2005; USFWS 2014). As of October 2015, IPaC indicates that the Indiana Bat (*Myotis sodalis;* endangered) and Northern Long-eared Bat (*M. septentrionalis*; NLEB; threatened) have the potential to occur in the proposed project area (Appendix K). According to information provided by the New York Natural Heritage Program, there are no known NLEB maternity roost trees within one-quarter (¼) mile of the proposed site; however, a NLEB hibernaculum is located within approximately three (3) miles of the site. An Indiana Bat hibernaculum is located within approximately eight (8) miles of the site. The Indiana and Northern Long-eared bats require mature specific tree species for habitat during migration, and may also roost in rock crevices and talus areas.

5.8.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative

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

Alternative I: Existing Alignment

In consultation with the USFWS FEMA determined the project may affect, but is unlikely to adversely affect, the Indiana Bat and NLEB. See Appendix K. Approximately 19 trees are proposed for removal for this project. Because of the proximity of the Indiana Bat hibernaculum, and, while uncommon, NLEB have been known to roost under bridges, the work will be subject to the following conditions.

1. Avoid cutting or destroying trees during the conservation cutting window for the Indiana Bat (March 31-October 31).

2. Each bridge shall be inspected before removal, and any bat colonies of any species that are observed before or during removal of temporary bridges or clearing for construction shall be immediately reported to FEMA Region 2 and USFWS Cortland Office.

5.9 Cultural Resources

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

5.9.1 Existing Conditions

The Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the proposed project includes a 0.55 acre area of disturbance associated with the bridge replacement, the temporary bridge, and the temporary realignment of the roadway. FEMA reviewed the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)'s Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS) website, which indicates that there are no previously identified historic resources in the APE. Furthermore, there are no properties of 45 years or more in the APE. The previous bridge was constructed in 1975 and was destroyed by Hurricane Irene. CRIS indicates that the APE for archaeology is not mapped as being archeologically sensitive, and is more than a mile away from the closest known archaeological site. The potential for intact archaeological deposits within the project area is very low. A review of available aerial imagery and topographic maps of the project area shows that this segment of the Boquet River has undergone considerable meandering, rendering the chance of intact archaeological deposits within its floodplain unlikely.

5.9.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not impact cultural resources.

Alternative I: Existing Alignment

There are no historic properties within the APE of the Proposed Action Alternative and very low potential for intact archaeological deposits. The Subrecipient consulted with SHPO, who determined that the Proposed Action Alternative would have No Effects to Historic Properties (15PR05066). Per Stipulation I.A.6 of the New York Statewide Programmatic Agreement executed November 24, 2014, FEMA confirms that the SOW has not changed and the Subrecipient's consultation with SHPO satisfies the requirements of Section 106. FEMA confirms SHPO's opinion that there are no historic properties as defined in 36 CFR 800.16(1) within the APE and finds No Historic Properties Affected for this undertaking. FEMA also consulted with the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe and their Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) regarding the Proposed Action Alternative in a letter dated October 14, 2015, providing information regarding the undertaking and its potential effects to historic properties, and affording the Tribe an opportunity to participate in the consultation. No response was received from the Tribe. SHPO and THPO correspondence can be found in Appendix L.

5.10 Aesthetics and Visual Resources

5.10.1 Existing Conditions

The project site is surrounded by the Boquet River, forested areas to the east, US Route 9 to the west, and limited residential properties in the area. The area is generally flat, and contains residences on large lots that are mostly forested. The APA has jurisdiction on construction projects in this area along rivers and streams in the Adirondack Park and enforces tree cutting and construction restrictions within immediate vicinity of the river.

5.10.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would have a long term impact on aesthetic and visual resources. Currently, the existing bridge is only temporary and is not intended for permanent use. The bridge is not compatible with the view-scape of the Boquet River Valley.

Alternative I: Existing Alignment

Temporary impacts would be expected to aesthetics and visual resources during construction. No long-term impacts to aesthetics and visual resources would be expected. The alternative consists of constructing a new bridge on the existing site. The bridge abutments and bridge structure would be reconstructed to current standards. Tree removal proposed would have minor impacts to aesthetics and visual resources.

5.11 Socioeconomic Resources

5.11.1 Existing Conditions

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the 2010 Population of the Town of Elizabethtown was 1,163 persons and Essex County had a population of 39,370 persons. The total number of households in the entire town was 510. The Median Household Income for the Town was $53,750 and the Median Household Income for the County was $50,322.

Lobdell Lane provides access for four (4) residential properties (one of which is seasonal), a Christmas tree farm, and is also used for the Otis Mountain Festival. Reportedly, the festival may have upwards of a 1,000 people attending that would use the bridge.

5.11.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative

This alternative may have an adverse impact on the socioeconomic resources of the Town of Elizabethtown and residents of Lobdell Lane over the long term. The existing bridge is temporary and is not meant for permanent use.

Alternative I: Existing Alignment

Short-term positive impact to socioeconomic resources would be anticipated as a result of construction jobs and activity in the area that may support shopping/restaurants/gasoline/hardware & supplies/other retail. The long-term impact would restore safe passage across the Boquet River to Lobdell Lane.

5.12 Environmental Justice

EO 12898, entitled "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations," guides Federal agencies to "make environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations" (EPA 1994).

5.12.1 Existing Conditions

According to 2010 census data and the 2014 American Community Survey, the population of the Town of Elizabethtown is predominately Caucasian (estimated 97.2%). About 10.3% of the Town of Elizabethtown residents and 11.4% of Essex County residents live below the poverty level. The project location is not delineated as an Environmental Justice community.

5.12.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative
The No Action Alternative would not have high or adverse impacts on human health and human environment of minority or low-income populations.

Alternative I: Existing Alignment
Alternative I would not have high or adverse impacts on human health and human environment of minority or low-income populations. All residents would benefit as a result of the proposed action because it provides a safe, reliable, and permanent river crossing.

5.13 Air Quality

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

5.13.1 Existing Conditions

As identified on the EPA EJ Mapper, the proposed project is not located in a non-attainment area for Ozone 8-Hour, Lead 2008 Standard, Particulate Matter (PM) 2.5 Annual, or PM 2.5 24-Hour Standard.

5.13.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative
The No Action Alternative would not impact air quality.

Alternative I: Existing Alignment
For Alternative I, temporary impacts (one construction season) to air quality would be anticipated during construction activities; no long-term impacts are expected. Construction activities on the project site may have a potential impact on the local air quality through the generation of fugitive

dust. Fugitive dust is generated during ground breaking and excavation activities. Emissions from diesel construction vehicles are also a potential source of air pollution. The use of BMPs would help minimize dust and vehicle emissions. BMPs may include but would not be limited to application of water or stabilizers to control dust or reducing equipment idling time to prevent excessive emissions. The Subrecipient is responsible for coordinating with EPA on air conformity review.

5.14 Noise

Sound pressure level (SPL) is used to measure the magnitude of sound and is expressed in decibels (dB or dBA), with the threshold of human hearing defined as 0 dBA. The SPL increases logarithmically, so that when the intensity of a sound is increased by a factor of 10, its SPL rises by 10 dB, while a 100-fold increase in the intensity of a sound increases the SPL by 20 dB.

Equivalent noise level (Leq) is the average of sound energy over time, so that one sound occurring for 2 minutes would have the same Leq of a sound twice as loud occurring for 1 minute. The day night noise level (Ldn) is based on the Leq, and is used to measure the average sound impacts for the purpose of guidance for compatible land use. It weights the impact of sound as it is perceived at night against the impact of the same sound heard during the day. This is done by adding 10 dBA to all noise levels measured between 10:00 pm and 7:00 am. For instance, the sound of a car on a rural highway may have an SPL of 50 dBA when measured from the front porch of a house. If the measurement were taken at night, a value of 60 dBA would be recorded and incorporated into the 24-hour Ldn.

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

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

5.14.1 Existing Conditions

The project site is located in a predominately rural area in the Town of Elizabethtown, Essex County, New York, and contains a few homes. The ambient noise level in the vicinity of the project site is typical for a rural area. Most vehicle noise in the area is generated along US Route 9, although routine traffic crossing of the bridge generates some noise. The Ldn is typically about 45 dBA for rural agricultural areas and 55 dBA for small-town and suburban residential areas.

5.14.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative
The No Action Alternative would not impact ambient noise levels.

Alternative I: Existing Alignment
Temporary impact (one construction season) to ambient noise levels would be anticipated during construction; FEMA anticipates that long-term impacts would return to pre-disaster levels. BMPs such as manufacturer specified noise reduction equipment should be used during construction to minimize impacts.

5.15 Traffic

5.15.1 Existing Conditions
US Route 9 presents moderate traffic volumes during peak hours of the day. Traffic may increase in the summer months due to tourism and seasonal homeowners. Lobdell Lane is a dead end road and the only access is via the bridge. Year round traffic is considered low due to the minimal residential properties (three full time and one seasonal). Increased traffic during summer months is a result of a festival and access to the river for fishing and swimming. A traffic count study was not performed for this report.

5.15.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative
The No Action Alternative would not affect traffic volume.

Alternative I: Existing Alignment
Short-term impact to traffic would be anticipated during construction; positive long-term impacts are anticipated due to the construction of the new bridge. The presence of construction and delivery vehicles is necessary during construction; however, this impact would be temporary and all site construction activities would be consistent with local and state regulations.

A temporary bridge would be constructed to allow access to the Lobdell Lane during construction. This is the only feasible option since the existing road only has one access point (i.e., through the bridge) and the existing bridge is only one lane. US Route 9 would have to be temporarily shifted to accommodate the construction of the new bridge. The lane shift would be permitted by NYS DOT and would only affect traffic during construction. The new bridge would be more resilient to future storm events since the bottom chord of the bridge would be elevated and the risks of embankment scour will be reduced by the wider bridge span.

5.16 Public Health and Safety

5.16.1 Existing Conditions
The Town of Elizabethtown's public health and safety was compromised because of the loss of the bridge. The reliance on a temporary bridge continues a diminished potential for safe passage.

5.16.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative
The No Action Alternative could negatively impact public health and safety over the long-term.

Alternative I: Existing Alignment
The impact on the overall public health and safety would be positive through the return of a safe and reliable bridge crossing over the Boquet River. The completed bridge would meet all state, local, and federal codes and regulations for public health and safety and would be more resilient to future flood incidents.

5.17 Climate Change

EO 13514 "Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy and Economic Performance" sets sustainability goals for Federal agencies and focuses on making improvements in their environmental, energy and economic performance. EO 13653 "Preparing the United States for the Impacts of Climate Change" sets standards to prepare the United States for the impacts on climate change by undertaking actions to enhance climate preparedness and resilience. FEMA is required, under these EOs, to implement climate change adaptability and green infrastructure in FEMA funded projects when feasible.

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

5.17.1 Existing Conditions

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

5.17.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative
The No Action Alternative could potentially be impacted or be significantly or uniquely impacted by climate change. The temporary bridge is not intended for permanent use and may be susceptible to future flooding. Furthermore, the continued use of the temporary bridge on the exiting abutments continues to restrict river flows and increases the likelihood of future flood damage.

Alternative I: Existing Alignment
Alternative I may be potentially impacted or be significantly or uniquely impacted by climate change. Increased floods could still potentially affect the proposed action, although the new bridge would be more resilient to flooding.

5.18 Cumulative Impacts
In accordance with NEPA, this EA considers the overall cumulative impact of the Proposed Action and other actions that are related in terms of time or proximity. Cumulative effects are defined by the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) as the impact on the environment resulting from the incremental impacts of the evaluated actions when combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of the source, such as Federal or non-Federal. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taken over time. Reasonably foreseeable future actions within the community include construction of a new bridge. The potential impacts from the proposed project (Proposed Action) would not cumulatively have a significant adverse impact on the human environment. The restoration of the bridge would be a positive cumulative benefit to the community. There are no other nearby or related projects known at this time. Future development on Lobdell Lane appears limited due to the remoteness and existing rural residential nature of the surrounding area.

6. Permits and Project Conditions
The Subrecipient is responsible to obtain all applicable Federal, state, and local permits for project implementation prior to construction, and to adhere to all permit conditions. The project plans and permits have not been finalized or obtained for this project at this time. The following permit or permit conditions may be applicable to this project:

1. Excavated soil and waste materials will be managed and disposed of in accordance with applicable Federal, state, and local regulations.
2. The Subrecipient shall be responsible to comply with the NYSDEC State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit for stormwater discharge from construction activity or other applicable SPDES permit, in accordance with NYSECL. A NYSDEC General Permit for Stormwater Discharges is required to cover the proposed action. The Subrecipient shall provide NYSDHSES/FEMA a copy of the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and a copy of the Notice of Intent Form at grant project closeout or other time identified in the NYSDHSES/FEMA per grant administration documentation guidance requirements. If an individual SPDES permit is determined to be required, the Subrecipient shall provide a copy of the obtained permit, as well as supporting SWPPP to NYSDHSES/FEMA at grant project closeout or other times identified by NYSDHSES/FEMA per grant administrative documentation guidance requirements. For more information regarding SPDES, visit the following website: http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/43133.html.
3. The Subrecipient and its construction contractor(s) will conduct construction using best management practices to limit noise, dust and sedimentation, spills, and erosion during construction.

4. In the event of discovery of soil or water contaminants exceeding reportable levels, the Subrecipient and its construction contractor(s) will follow applicable NYSDEC protocol to report and respond to the contaminants.
5. The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) may require a permit for work that would involve wetland and stream disturbance. The work may be authorized under a nationwide permit. The project will likely require an Article 15 permit from NYSDEC for stream disturbance, excavation and fill in navigable waters, and freshwater wetlands. In addition, a general permit may be required from the NYS Adirondack Park Agency (APA) for regulated activities in freshwater wetlands. The Subrecipient is responsible for obtaining all necessary permits and complying with all conditions of the permits including but not limited to notification and signature requirements to ensure validation of the permits.
6. In the event that unmarked graves, burials, human remains, or archeological deposits are uncovered, the Subrecipient and its contractors will immediately halt construction activities in the vicinity of the discovery, secure the site, and take reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm to the finds. The Subrecipient will inform the NYSDHSES, SHPO and FEMA immediately. The Subrecipient must secure all archaeological findings and shall restrict access to the area. Work in sensitive areas may not resume until consultations are completed or until an archaeologist who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards determines the extent and historical significance of the discovery. Work may not resume at or around the delineated archaeological deposit until the Subrecipient is notified by NYSDHSES.
7. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards shall be followed during construction to avoid adverse impacts to worker health and safety.
8. The project area serves as potential summer roosting habitat for the listed endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and the listed threatened Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), and hibernacula for both species are found within several miles of the project location. Cutting or destroying trees during the conservation cutting window for the Indiana Bat (March 31-October 31) is prohibited. Each bridge shall be inspected before removal, and any bat colonies of any species that are observed before or during removal of temporary bridges or clearing for construction shall be immediately reported to FEMA Region 2 and USFWS Cortland Office.
9. If the Recipient and Subrecipient obtain site fill for construction, the fill must be from a permitted commercial supplier or locally municipally owned soil/gravel borrow area permitted for mining/excavation as fill material. If the Recipient and/or Subrecipient plan to obtain soil or gravel from a non-commercial source or site that is not permitted, the details of the proposed source location must be submitted to FEMA for approval as a scope of work change prior to construction implementation. FEMA would need to conduct a federal agency environmental and historic preservation compliance review of non-permitted/non-commercial sources prior to construction implementation. The environmental concerns would be potential impacts to cultural resources or habitat areas at an excavation site not previously reviewed, permitted and otherwise cleared for use as a borrow area.
10. The Subrecipient should restore disturbed construction areas of the site with native seed and/or plant species to minimize soil erosion and sedimentation, as well as enhance environmental habitat quality of the project area. The Subrecipient should restore disturbed

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

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

11. Subrecipient shall not initiate construction activities until fifteen (15) days after the date that the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been signed as "APPROVED."

7. Public Involvement

In accordance with NEPA, the EA report will be released for a 30-day public review and comment period. Availability of the document for comment will be advertised via public notice in the *Press-Republican* newspaper. A hard copy of the EA will be made available for review at the Essex County Department of Public Works, 8053 US Route 9, Elizabethtown, New York 12932. An electronic copy of the EA will be made available for download from the FEMA website at http://www.fema.gov/resource-document-library.

This EA reflects the evaluation and assessment of the Federal government, the decision-maker for the Federal action; however, FEMA takes into consideration any substantive comments received during the public review period to inform the final decision regarding grant approval and project implementation.

The public is invited to submit written comments by mail to FEMA, Office of Environmental Planning & Historic Preservation, Leo O'Brien Federal Building, 11A Clinton Avenue, Suite 742, Albany, New York 12207, or E-mail to: FEMA4020-4031Comment@fema.dhs.gov.

Copies of the EA will be sent to:

NYSDHSES
1220 Washington Avenue, Building 7A, Floor 4
Albany, NY 12242

NYSDEC Region 5
Office of Environmental Permits
1115 NY-86
Ray Brook, NY 12977

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

Adirondack Park Agency, Ms. Amy Hall

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Regulatory Program - Watervliet, NY, Mr. John Connell

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region II - Strategic Planning and Multi-Media Programs, Chief of NEPA Section, 309/NEPA Compliance Coordinator, Ms. Grace Musumeci.

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation - Division of Waters, Floodplain Management, Mr. William Nechamen

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Mr. John Bonafide and Mr. Larry Moss

Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe, Arnold Printup

The EA evaluation resulted in the identification of no significant impacts to the human environment. Obtaining and implementing permit requirements along with appropriate best management practices would avoid or minimize potential adverse effects associated with the three alternatives considered in this EA to below the level of a significant impact. If no substantive comments are received as a result of the public review and comment period, FEMA will adopt the EA as Final and issue the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). If substantive comments are received, FEMA will evaluate and address comments as part of the FONSI or prepare a Final Environmental Assessment to document comments and responses and any changes to the proposed action in response to input from the public.

8. Conclusion

FEMA through NEPA, and the Subrecipient through the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), have found that the Proposed Action to reconstruct a bridge across the Boquet River, which is the Subrecipient's Alternative I, is a practicable solution that would not significantly adversely impact the environment. During the construction period, short-term impacts to soil, vegetation, traffic, air quality, aesthetics and noise are anticipated. These short-term impacts would be mitigated through permitting by the regulatory agencies and utilizing best management practices such as silt fences, site restoration, proper equipment maintenance, and appropriate signage. No long-term adverse impacts are anticipated from the proposed project.

9. List of Preparers

AES Northeast, PLLC, 10-12 City Hall Place, Plattsburgh, New York 12901

Essex County Department of Public Works, 8053 US Route 9, Elizabethtown, New York 12932

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

Schoder Rivers Associates, Evergreen Professional Park, 453 Dixon Road, Ste 7, Bldg. 3, Queensbury, NY 12804

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11. Appendices

Appendix A – Alternative I Project Plans

Appendix B – Alternative II Project Plans

Appendix C – Table 1

Appendix D – Soils Report

Appendix E – Farmland Protection Policy Act Consult

Appendix F - APA Land Use and Development Map

Appendix G- SEQRA Documents

Appendix H – Eight-Step Decision Making Process

Appendix I – USFWS National Wetland Inventory Map

Appendix J – Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM)

Appendix K – Endangered Species Act Consultation

Appendix L – National Historic Preservation Act Consultation