



FEMA

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Programmatic Environmental Assessment Alternative Housing Pilot Program Permanent Housing Calcasieu Parish, Louisiana

Background

Recognizing the extensive and complex housing challenges facing victims and communities as a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and acknowledging the limitations on Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) ordinary statutory authority to provide non-temporary housing solutions, Congress appropriated funds to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to support alternative housing pilot programs (Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2006, Public Law 109-234).

The Alternative Housing Pilot Program (AHPP) represents a one-time exception to FEMA's existing authority under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act which legally binds FEMA to a temporary housing mission, by providing an opportunity to explore, implement, and evaluate innovative approaches to housing solutions, and to address ongoing housing challenges created by the 2005 hurricane season in the states of the Gulf Coast region, including the State of Louisiana, especially in the southernmost parishes such as Calcasieu Parish. The Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) has applied for FEMA funding under the AHPP to provide permanent housing solutions for eligible applicant families displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita within Calcasieu Parish (program area).

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1500 *et. seq.*, 44 CFR 10 *et. seq.*, and DHS's Management Directive 5100.1, FEMA has prepared a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) for the AHPP in Calcasieu Parish, Louisiana (April 2009) to evaluate the alternatives proposed for the implementation of this program. Three alternatives were analyzed in the PEA; the alternatives are listed below and include a no action alternative and two action alternatives.

- Alternative 1: No Action Alternative.
- Alternative 2: Installation of Permanent AHPP units on Previously Disturbed Land.
- Alternative 3: Installation of Permanent AHPP units on Undeveloped Land.

FEMA has prepared this PEA to streamline compliance with NEPA and to expedite the provision of permanent housing to displaced persons. FEMA will apply the PEA to the alternative actions described above throughout the program area. For actions with impacts not described in the PEA or for action-specific considerations that require additional analysis, as suggested by the PEA, FEMA will prepare a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) that tiers from this PEA. The PEA, and SEAs as appropriate, will provide the required NEPA clearance. They will also provide, along with appropriate consultations, a means for FEMA to address compliance with other Federal environmental laws and regulations, including the Endangered Species Act and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

Under the proposed program alternatives, as described in the PEA, impacts to geology and hazardous materials and wastes are not anticipated. Positive impacts to socioeconomics are expected. Biological resources and wetlands would not be impacted under Alternative 2 but may potentially be impacted under Alternative 3. Historic properties and their viewsheds may potentially be impacted but impacts will be determined by FEMA through the Section 106 process and in consultation with any affected tribes.

During the construction period, short-term impacts to soils, water quality, transportation, air quality, and noise are anticipated. Also during the construction period, subsurface cultural resources impacts could occur during ground disturbing activities; however, Section 106 consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and any affected tribes would be on-going to limit any potential impacts which could occur. Minimal, but insignificant floodplain impacts could occur with the construction of the cottages. All short-term impacts require conditions to minimize and mitigate impacts to the proposed project site and surrounding areas.

Conditions

The LRA shall comply with all prescribed conditions set forth in the PEA, including but not limited to the following conditions. LRA shall be responsible for completing all necessary consultations, permitting, and mitigation for the potential loss of resources prior to the commencement of construction activities.

Any changes to this approved scope of work will require submission to, and evaluation and approval by FEMA prior to initiation of any work, for compliance with NEPA. Non-compliance with the requirements noted above may jeopardize the receipt of Federal funding.

1. In the event that archaeological deposits, including any Native American pottery, stone tools, or human remains, are uncovered, the project would be halted. LRA or its contractor would stop all work immediately in the vicinity of the discovery and take reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm to the finds. All archaeological findings would be secured and access to the sensitive area restricted. The LRA would inform FEMA immediately and FEMA would consult with the SHPO or Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and interested tribes. Work in sensitive areas would not resume until consultation is completed and appropriate measures have been taken to ensure that the project is in compliance with the NHPA.
2. The AHPP cottages will be constructed on piers and if constructed within the 100-year floodplain the finished floor will be elevated above the preliminary digital insurance rate map (DFIRM) base flood elevation (BFE), as available. A site elevation survey would be performed by the LRA's partners, Habitat for Humanity and Project Build a Future, to ensure that the AHPP housing will meet or exceed the BFE, as necessary. FEMA has gone through the Eight-Step Planning Process to ensure that its actions are consistent with EO 11988 within Calcasieu Parish. An initial notice for the building of AHPP units within the State of Louisiana has been previously publicized. A final notice was publicly circulated during the public comment period for this PEA for 15 days starting on March 4,

2009, explaining the various FEMA actions and included alternatives and the reasons for siting in the floodplain.

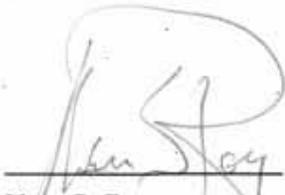
3. To minimize noise impacts to nearby sensitive noise receptors, construction activity will be limited to daylight hours during the work week, between 7:30 am to 5:30 pm on Monday through Friday.
4. Under Alternative 3, if threatened and endangered species and their habitats will be impacted at a specific AHPP site, then FEMA will consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries).
5. Under Alternative 3, if wetlands will be impacted at a specific site, FEMA will delineate the proposed site to identify the presence of jurisdictional wetlands and waters of the U.S. Should wetlands or waters of the U.S. be identified and their impacts considered unavoidable, early coordination with the regulatory section of the local U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) district, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ), and other appropriate agencies will be completed prior to the initiation of the construction activities.
6. Should LRA or its contractor encounter any explosive or flammable materials, toxic chemicals, and/or radioactive materials during site clearing and demolition then LRA will follow the requirements of 24 CFR Part 51 to minimize any potential harm to human health or the natural environment. In addition, all debris associated with site clearing will be removed and disposed of in accordance with all Federal, state, and local regulations.

Findings

Based upon the information contained in the PEA, the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts resulting from implementation of the alternative actions, and in accordance with FEMA's regulations in 44 CFR Part 10, a Finding of No Significant

Impact (FONSI) is concluded. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process will not be required, based on the fact that there would be no long-term adverse direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts on the natural environment resulting from FEMA actions, as identified in the PEA, taken to establish permanent housing under the AHPP.

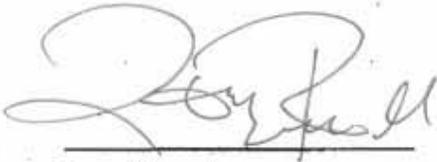
This FONSI is based upon a site-specific proposed action adhering to one of the alternatives described in the PEA and meeting all conditions prescribed for that particular alternative. In those instances where the proposed action does not conform to the described alternative actions or to all of the prescribed conditions, a SEA and corresponding FONSI would be prepared to address the differences.



Marc S. Roy
Environmental Liaison Officer
Louisiana Transitional Recovery Office
FEMA-1603/1607-DR-LA

4/2/09

Date



Tony Russell
Acting Director
Louisiana Transitional Recovery Office
FEMA-1603/1607-DR-LA

4/06/2009

Date



Jomar Maldonado
Acting Environmental Officer
Office of Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation
FEMA/Mitigation Directorate

4/1/09

Date