

Draft Environmental Assessment

Jackson County Departments and Services Relocation Project

Jackson County, Mississippi

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FEMA

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This document was prepared by



10550 Richmond Avenue, Suite 155
Houston, TX 77042

200 Orchard Ridge Drive, Suite 101
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABFE	advisory base flood elevation
ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
amsl	above mean sea level
APE	Area of Potential Effects
BMP	Best Management Practice
CAA	Clean Air Act
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CO	carbon monoxide
CWA	Clean Water Act
CZMA	Coastal Zone Management Act
dB	decibel
DFIRM	Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map
DNL	Day-Night Average Sound Level
EA	Environmental Assessment
EC	Election Commission
EO	Executive Order
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act
MARIS	Mississippi Automated Resource Information System
MDAH	Mississippi Department of Archives and History
MDEQ	Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
MDMR	Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
MDOC	Mississippi Department of Corrections
MDOT	Mississippi Department of Transportation
MEMA	Mississippi Emergency Management Agency
MSU	Mississippi State University
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NESHAP	National Emission Standards of Hazardous Air Pollutants
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NISTAC	Nationwide Infrastructure Support Technical Assistance Consultants
NO ₂	nitrogen dioxide
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places



ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
O ₃	ozone
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
P&P	Probation and Parole
Pb	lead
PM _{2.5}	particulate matter less than 2.5 microns
PM ₁₀	particulate matter less than 10 microns
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SO ₂	sulfur dioxide
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
THPO	Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USCB	U.S. Census Bureau
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



1.0 INTRODUCTION

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina struck the Mississippi Gulf Coast, causing extensive damage. Subsequently, a Presidential Disaster Declaration, FEMA-1604-DR-MS, was signed for Katrina.

Jackson County, Mississippi, has submitted an application for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding under FEMA's Public Assistance Program being administered in response to FEMA-1604-DR-MS for the Jackson County Departments and Services Relocation Project in Pascagoula. The project consists of the construction of a new Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) Probation and Parole (P&P) Office building and the acquisition and renovation of an existing structure to house the Mississippi State University (MSU) Extension Service and the Jackson County Election Commission (EC).

In accordance with the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, PL 93-288, as amended, and implementing regulations at 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 206, FEMA is required to review the environmental effects of the proposed action prior to making a funding decision. This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared in accordance with FEMA's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations found in 44 CFR Part 10.

2.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

The MDOC P&P Office, the Jackson County EC, and the MSU Extension Service formerly occupied two buildings in Pascagoula (Figures 1 and 2, Appendix A). The MDOC P&P Office and the Jackson County EC shared a 3,552-square-foot, one-story, brick building located at 2926 Pascagoula Street. The MSU Extension Service occupied a 3,511-square-foot, one-story, brick building located at 2941 Pascagoula Street.

The two buildings are located across Pascagoula Street from each other and are within the 100-year floodplain and the Advisory Base Flood Elevation (ABFE) Coastal High Hazard Area. Both buildings were extensively damaged by Katrina's high winds and storm surge, including inundation by up to 5 feet of water. The damages to each of the buildings exceeded FEMA's 50% repair/replacement ratio, making both buildings eligible for demolition and replacement.

The MDOC P&P Office is currently providing service at a reduced capacity, utilizing a temporary, county-owned facility located at 2902 Shortcut Road in Pascagoula. This facility is of insufficient size and does not fully serve the needs of the MDOC P&P Office. The MSU Extension Service and the Jackson County EC are currently utilizing an office building located at 4111 Amonett Street in Pascagoula (Figures 1 and 3, Appendix A). This facility is of sufficient size, but will require interior renovations to allow both agencies to operate at full capacity. Consequently there is a need to provide Jackson County with suitable replacement facilities.

3.0 ALTERNATIVES

This section describes the alternatives that were considered in addressing the purpose and need stated in Section 2. Two alternatives were evaluated: the No Action Alternative, and the



Proposed Action Alternative, which is the construction of a new MDOC P&P Office building and the acquisition and renovation of the Amonett Street building to house the MSU Extension Service and the Jackson County EC.

Alternative 1: No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, a new MDOC P&P Office building would not be built and the Amonett Street building currently housing the MSU Extension Service and Jackson County EC would not be purchased and renovated. The MDOC P&P Office would continue to provide services at a reduced capacity from its temporary location. The MSU Extension Service and Jackson County EC would continue to provide services at a reduced capacity utilizing the unrenovated office building at Amonett Street. Due to the significant damage sustained by the two buildings that formerly housed the MDOC P&P Office, Jackson County EC, and MSU Extension Service, both structures would be demolished.

Alternative 2: Construction of a New MDOC P&P Office Building and Acquisition and Renovation of the Amonett Street Building (Proposed Action)

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, Jackson County would construct a new facility for the MDOC P&P Office and would acquire and renovate the Amonett Street building that the MSU Extension Service and Jackson County EC are currently occupying.

The new MDOC P&P Office building would be constructed on a 0.75-acre lot, located at 1715 Kenneth Avenue in Pascagoula, which is adjacent to an existing MDOC facility and within a complex of government buildings (Figures 1 and 4, Appendix A). The proposed MDOC site is located within an industrial/commercial portion of Pascagoula. Approximately 40% of the site is paved; the remainder of the site is maintained lawn. The proposed MDOC site is bounded to the north by the MDOC Pascagoula Restitution Center and additional government service buildings; to the south by Kenneth Avenue and a motel; to the west by a driveway serving the government complex and the Literary Council Building; and to the east by the Jackson County Board of Supervisors office, the Jackson County Maintenance Facility, and the Mississippi Export Railroad. Photographs of the proposed MDOC site and vicinity are included in Appendix B.

The new MDOC P&P Office facility would consist of a 3,477-square-foot, one-story building, consisting of ten offices, a break room, a conference room, a file storage area, and a lobby (Figure 5, Appendix A). The existing paved surface situated on the southern portion on the proposed site would be resurfaced to create ample parking for the facility. Existing utilities that provide service to adjacent buildings, including municipal water, sewer, and power, would be utilized.

The MSU Extension Service and the Jackson County EC would be provided with permanent office space at 4111 Amonett Street in Pascagoula. The 11,890-square-foot building would also house additional Jackson County departments. Construction activities would be limited to interior renovations only, no exterior renovations or ground disturbing activities are anticipated. Photographs of the Amonett Street Building are included in Appendix B.

In accordance with FEMA's relocation policy for FEMA-1604-DR-MS, the former MDOC P&P Office and Jackson County EC building, and the MSU Extension Service building would be demolished and both building sites returned to grade and revegetated.



4.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND IMPACTS

The following table summarizes the potential impacts of the Proposed Action Alternative and conditions or mitigation measures to offset those impacts. Following the summary table, any resource areas for which potential impacts were identified, as well as high priority resources including floodplains, waters of the U.S., environmental justice, biological resources, and cultural resources, will be discussed in greater detail.

Affected Environment	Impacts	Mitigation
Geology and Soils	No impacts to geology are anticipated. Short-term minor impacts to soils may occur.	Appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs), such as installing silt fences and revegetating bare soils immediately upon completion of construction, would be used to stabilize soils
Surface Water	Temporary short-term impacts to adjacent surface waters are possible during demolition and construction activities.	The applicant will need a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for the project. Appropriate BMPs, such as installing silt fences and revegetating bare soils, would minimize runoff.
Groundwater	No impacts to groundwater are anticipated.	None.
Floodplains	No impacts to the floodplain are anticipated.	None.
Waters of the U.S. Including Wetlands	No impacts to waters of the U.S., including wetlands, would occur.	Appropriate BMPs, such as installing silt fences and stabilizing soils would minimize runoff into adjacent waters of the U.S.
Transportation	A minor temporary increase in the volume of construction traffic on roads in the immediate vicinity of the demolition and construction sites is anticipated.	Construction vehicles and equipment would be stored on site during project construction and appropriate signage would be posted on affected roadways.
Public Health and Safety	No impacts to public health and safety are anticipated.	All construction activities would be performed using qualified personnel and in accordance with the standards specified in Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations. Appropriate signage and barriers would be in place prior to construction activities to alert pedestrians and motorists of project activities.

Affected Environment	Impacts	Mitigation
Hazardous Materials	No impacts to hazardous materials or wastes are anticipated.	If any asbestos containing materials, lead-based paint and/or other hazardous materials are found during demolition or other construction activities, the applicant would comply with all federal, state, and local abatement and disposal requirements under the National Emission Standards of Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) program.
Socioeconomic Resources	No impacts to socioeconomic resources would occur.	None.
Environmental Justice	No disproportionately high or adverse effect on minority or low-income populations would occur.	None.
Air Quality	Short-term impacts to air quality would occur during the construction period.	Construction contractors would be required to water down construction areas when necessary; fuel-burning equipment running times would be kept to a minimum; engines would be properly maintained.
Noise	Short-term noise impacts would occur at the proposed project sites during the construction period.	Construction would occur during normal business hours and equipment would meet all local, state, and federal noise regulations.
Biological Resources	The project sites are previously disturbed and developed; no impacts to biological resources, including federally listed species, are anticipated.	None
Cultural Resources	No impacts to archeological or cultural resources are anticipated.	None

4.1 Geology and Soils

The former and proposed sites are underlain by coastal deposits, an unconsolidated geologic formation consisting of loam, sand, gravel, and clay (MARIS, 2008).

The former MSU Extension Service and MDOC P&P Office/Jackson County EC properties located on Pascagoula Street contain soils mapped as Harleston fine sandy loam and Smithton loam (USDA/NRCS, 2008). The Harleston series consists of deep, moderately well-drained, moderately permeable soils that are formed in marine or stream deposits consisting of thick beds of loamy sand (USDA/NRCS, 1997a). Harleston fine sandy loam soils are not listed as hydric



soils, but all areas are considered prime farmland (USDA/NRCS, 2008). The Smithton series consists of very deep, poorly drained, moderately permeable soils that formed in loamy alluvial sediments (USDA/NRCS, 1998). Smithton sandy loam soils are listed as hydric soils, but are not considered to be prime farmland (USDA/NRCS, 2008).

The proposed MDOC P&P Office project site on Kenneth Avenue contains soils mapped as Escambia very fine sandy loam (USDA/NRCS, 2008). The Escambia series consists of very deep, somewhat poorly drained, moderately to slowly permeable soils that formed in sandy and loamy marine sediments (USDA/NRCS, 2002). Escambia very fine sandy loam soils are not listed as hydric soils, but are considered to be prime farmland (USDA/NRCS, 2008).

The proposed MSU Extension Service/Jackson County EC building on Amonett Street is located in an area mapped as Stough loam (USDA/NRCS, 2008). The Stough series consists of deep, somewhat poorly drained soils that formed in loamy sediments of fluvial or marine origin (USDA/NRCS, 1997b). Stough loam soils are not listed as hydric soils, but are considered prime farmland (USDA/NRCS, 2008).

The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) states that federal agencies must “minimize the extent to which federal programs contribute to the unnecessary conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses...” Harleston fine sandy loam, Escambia very fine sandy loam, and Stough loam are classified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as prime farmland. However, according to the FPPA, “Farmland” does not include land that is already in or committed to urban development. The four sites affected by this project meet the definition of farmland “already in” urban development because they are located within the Pascagoula “urbanized area” on the Census 2000 urbanized area outline map (USCB, 2000). Therefore the FPPA does not apply and a FPPA farmland conversion impact rating form is not required.

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, no impacts to geology would occur. Soils on the locations of the former MSU Extension Services building and the MDOC P&P Office/Jackson County EC building on Pascagoula Street would be disturbed during demolition and site grading. Because the two demolition sites collectively comprise more than 1 acre, the applicant will be required to prepare a SWPPP. Implementation of appropriate BMPs would be required during all ground-disturbing activities, including the installation of silt fences and the revegetation of soils to minimize the potential for erosion.

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, no impacts to geology would occur. Soils on the locations of the former MSU Extension Services building and the MDOC P&P Office/Jackson County EC building on Pascagoula Street would be disturbed during demolition. Soils on the MDOC P&P Office proposed Kenneth Avenue site would be disturbed to develop the property. Because the two demolition sites and the construction site collectively comprise more than 1 acre, the applicant will be required to prepare a SWPPP. Implementation of appropriate BMPs would be required at each construction location, including the installation of silt fences and the revegetation of soils to minimize the potential for erosion. No impacts to soil would occur as a result of acquiring and renovating the Amonett Street building to house the MSU Extension Service and Jackson County EC.

On February 12, 2009, an agency consultation letter requesting project review was sent to the NRCS (Appendix C). A response letter, dated April 6, 2009, was received from NRCS stating that prime farmland determinations are not required within city limits.



4.2 Water Resources

4.2.1 Surface Water

The Clean Water Act (CWA), as amended in 1977, established the basic framework for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States.

The former MSU Extension Service and the MDOC P&P Office/Jackson County EC properties located on Pascagoula Street are located 600 and 800 feet, respectively, northwest of Communny Bayou. Both sites slope to the southwest toward Communny Bayou. Stormwater run-off from each site would tend to flow in southwesterly direction, being collected in the municipal stormwater conveyance system. Communny Bayou drains to the Pascagoula River and the Mississippi Sound. Elevations at these project sites range from 10 to 12 feet above mean sea level (amsl).

The proposed MDOC P&P Office project site on Kenneth Avenue is located approximately 600 feet southwest of an unnamed stream. The proposed site is relatively flat with an elevation at approximately 16 feet amsl. Stormwater run-off from the site would flow to the northeast toward the unnamed stream, which drains to Krebs Lake, then the Pascagoula River, and the Mississippi Sound. Additional site drainage would be collected by the municipal stormwater conveyance system.

The Amonett Street building is located approximately 200 feet north of Bayou Chico. The site is relatively flat with a paved surface at an elevation of approximately 16 feet amsl. Stormwater run-off from the site drains into the road-side ditch along Amonett Street, flowing south toward Bayou Chico.

A site visit conducted by Nationwide Infrastructure Support Technical Assistance Consultants (NISTAC) and FEMA biologists on March 5, 2009, verified these findings.

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, short-term impacts to adjacent, off-site surface waters would occur during demolition of the former MSU Extension Services building and the MDOC P&P Office/Jackson County EC building on Pascagoula Street due to soil erosion during ground disturbing activities. Because the two demolition sites collectively comprise more than 1 acre, the applicant will be required to apply for a NPDES permit. To reduce impacts to surface water, the demolition contractor would implement appropriate BMPs, such as installing silt fences and revegetating bare soils.

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, short-term impacts to adjacent, off-site surface waters would occur during demolition and construction due to soil erosion during ground disturbing activities. Because the two demolition sites and the construction site collectively comprise more than 1 acre, the applicant will be required to apply for a NPDES permit. To reduce impacts to surface water, the applicant would implement appropriate BMPs, such as installing silt fences and revegetating bare soils. No impacts to surface waters would result from the acquisition and renovation activities at the existing Amonett Street building site.

On February 12, 2009, letters requesting project review were sent to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Water Management District, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality Office of Pollution Control, and the Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission (Appendix C). No responses have been received to date.



4.2.2 Floodplains

Executive Order (EO) 11988 (Floodplain Management) requires federal agencies to avoid direct or indirect support of development within the 100-year floodplain whenever there is a practicable alternative. FEMA uses Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) to identify the regulatory 100-year floodplain for the National Flood Insurance Program. Consistent with EO 11988, both conventional FIRMs and preliminary Digital FIRMs (DFIRMs) were examined during the preparation of this EA.

The former MSU Extension Service and the MDOC P&P Office/Jackson County EC properties located on Pascagoula Street are located within the 100-year floodplain according to both the FIRM (FEMA, 1984c) and DFIRM (MDEQ, 2007b). The proposed MDOC P&P Office site on Kenneth Avenue is located outside of the 100-year floodplain according to the FIRM (FEMA, 1984a); however the preliminary DFIRM indicates that a small portion of this property, located on the northwestern corner of the site, is within the 100-year floodplain (Zone AE) (MDEQ, 2007b). Based on preliminary site plans for the proposed project, the new building would be constructed on the portion of the property that is located outside the 100-year floodplain, in Zone X (500-year floodplain). The Amonett Street building site is located outside of the 100-year floodplain according to the FIRM (FEMA, 1984b), but is located within the 100-year floodplain on the DFIRM (MDEQ, 2007a; MDEQ, 2007b).

FEMA has also developed ABFE maps based on flood frequency analysis that update the flood risk data with information on storms that have occurred in the past 25 years, including Hurricane Katrina. The ABFE map shows that the former MSU Extension Service and MDOC P&P/Jackson County EC properties were located within the ABFE Coastal High Hazard Area (FEMA, 2006a). The proposed MDOC P&P project site on Kenneth Avenue is partially located within the ABFE (FEMA, 2006a). However, preliminary site plans show that the proposed building would be constructed on the portion of the property that is located outside of the ABFE. The Amonett Street site is located outside of the ABFE (FEMA, 2006a; FEMA, 2006b).

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, the former MSU Extension Service and MDOC P&P Office/Jackson County EC buildings would be removed from the 100-year floodplain and the sites returned to grade and revegetated; this would reduce occupancy of the floodplain and is considered a beneficial impact.

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, the former MSU Extension Service and MDOC P&P Office/Jackson County EC buildings would be demolished, and the sites returned to grade and revegetated; this would reduce occupancy of the floodplain and is considered a beneficial impact. The new MDOC P&P building would be located outside the 100-year floodplain and would have no impact on the floodplain.

The Amonett Street site is located within the 100-year floodplain; however the existing building was constructed with a finished floor elevation equal to the site's base flood elevation at 13 feet. As no ground disturbing activities are proposed at the Amonett Street building site, no impacts to the floodplain are anticipated.

4.2.3 Waters of the U.S. including Wetlands

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S., including wetlands, pursuant to Section 404 of the CWA. Additionally,



EO 11990 (Protection of Wetlands) requires federal agencies to avoid, to the extent possible, adverse impact to wetlands.

A review of the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) map indicated that there are no potential wetland areas located on the former or proposed project sites (USFWS, 2009). A site visit by NISTAC and FEMA biologists on March 5, 2009, confirmed that no wetlands are present on any of the sites.

The Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) enables coastal states, including Mississippi, to designate state coastal zone boundaries and develop coastal management programs to improve protection of sensitive shoreline resources and guide sustainable use of coastal areas. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the former and proposed project sites are located within the Mississippi Coastal Zone (NOAA, 2004).

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, no impacts to waters of the U.S., including wetlands, would occur.

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, no impacts to waters of the U.S., including wetlands would occur.

On February 12, 2009, letters requesting project review were sent to the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR), Bureau of Wetlands Permitting, and to the USACE Mobile District (Appendix C). In a response letter from MDMR dated February 25, 2009, the agency stated that it had no objections to the project provided that there are no direct or indirect impacts to coastal wetlands and no coastal program agency objects to the proposal (Appendix C). No response has been received from the USACE to date.

4.3 Transportation

The former MSU Extension Service and the MDOC P&P Office/Jackson County EC properties were located on Pascagoula Street, which is classified by the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) as a minor arterial street (MDOT, 2005). The proposed MDOC project site is located on Kenneth Avenue, which is not classified by MDOT. Access to Kenneth Avenue is provided by Market Street, a minor arterial, and Highway 90, a principal arterial. The proposed MSU Extension Service/Jackson County EC building is located on Amonett Street, which is not classified by MDOT. Access to Amonett Street is provided by 14th Street, a minor arterial, and Telephone Road, a principal arterial street.

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, short-term impacts to transportation and site access are anticipated during demolition of the former MSU Extension Services building and the MDOC P&P Office/Jackson County EC building on Pascagoula Street. There would be a minor temporary increase in the volume of traffic on roads in the immediate vicinity of these sites that could potentially result in a slower traffic flow for the duration of the demolition phase. To mitigate potential delays, demolition vehicles and equipment would be stored on site and appropriate signage would be posted on affected roadways.

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, short-term impacts to transportation and site access are anticipated during demolition of the former MSU Extension Services building and the MDOC P&P Office/Jackson County EC building on Pascagoula Street and construction of the proposed MDOC facility on Kenneth Avenue. There would be a minor



temporary increase in the volume of construction traffic on roads in the immediate vicinity of these sites that could potentially result in a slower traffic flow for the duration of the construction/demolition phase. To mitigate potential delays, construction vehicles and equipment would be stored on site during project construction and appropriate signage would be posted on affected roadways. No short-term impacts are anticipated at the Amonett Street building site.

Post-construction, traffic volumes in the vicinity of the proposed project areas would return to normal levels. No long-term traffic impacts are anticipated. On February 12, 2009, a letter requesting project review was sent to MDOT (Appendix C). To date, no response has been received.

4.4 Environmental Justice

EO 12898 (Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations) mandates that federal agencies identify and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations. Socioeconomic and demographic data for the project area were reviewed to determine if a disproportionate number of minority or low-income persons have the potential to be adversely affected by the proposed project.

The City of Pascagoula has a population of 21,865 individuals. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (USCB) 2005-2007 American Community Survey, the median household income reported in the City of Pascagoula was \$35,894 with 22.9 percent of individuals living below the poverty level. The median household income reported in all of Jackson County was \$44,185, with 16.0 percent of individuals living below the poverty level. The median household income in the State of Mississippi was \$35,632, with 21.1 percent of individuals living below the poverty level (USCB, 2009). Minorities represented 34.9 percent, 25.0 percent, and 39.1 percent, respectively, of the City of Pascagoula, Jackson County, and the State of Mississippi populations.

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no disproportionately high or adverse effect on minority or low-income populations. All populations would continue to be adversely impacted by the reduced capacity and efficiency of the MDOC P&P Office, Jackson County EC, and the MSU Extension Service.

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, there would be no disproportionately high and adverse effect on minority or low-income populations. Implementation of the Proposed Action would benefit all populations within the City of Pascagoula by providing the MDOC P&P Office, Jackson County EC, and the MSU Extension Service with the facilities necessary to carry out their daily operations efficiently and effectively.

4.5 Air Quality

The Clean Air Act (CAA) requires that states adopt ambient air quality standards. The standards have been established to protect the public from potentially harmful amounts of pollutants. Under the CAA, the EPA establishes primary and secondary air quality standards. Primary air quality standards protect the public health, including the health of “sensitive populations, such as



people with asthma, children, and older adults.” Secondary air quality standards protect public welfare by promoting ecosystem health, and preventing decreased visibility and damage to crops and buildings. EPA has set National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for the following six criteria pollutants: ozone (O₃), particulate matter (PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), and lead (Pb). According to the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), the entire state of Mississippi is classified as in attainment, meaning that criteria air pollutants do not exceed the NAAQS (MDEQ, 2009).

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, short-term impacts to air quality could occur during demolition of the former MSU Extension Service and MDOC P&P Office/Jackson County EC buildings. To reduce temporary impacts to air quality, construction contractors would be required to water down construction areas when necessary. Emissions from fuel-burning internal combustion engines (e.g., heavy equipment and earthmoving machinery) could temporarily increase the levels of some of the criteria pollutants, including CO, NO₂, O₃, PM₁₀, and non-criteria pollutants such as volatile organic compounds. To reduce the emission of criteria pollutants, fuel-burning equipment running times would be kept to a minimum and engines would be properly maintained. No long-term impacts to air quality are anticipated.

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, short-term impacts to air quality could occur during demolition of the former MSU Extension Service and MDOC P&P Office/Jackson County EC buildings, and during construction of the new MDOC P&P Office building. To reduce temporary impacts to air quality, construction contractors would be required to water down construction areas when necessary. Emissions from fuel-burning internal combustion engines (e.g., heavy equipment and earthmoving machinery) could temporarily increase the levels of some of the criteria pollutants, including CO, NO₂, O₃, PM₁₀, and non-criteria pollutants such as volatile organic compounds. To reduce the emission of criteria pollutants, fuel-burning equipment running times would be kept to a minimum and engines would be properly maintained. No long-term impacts to air quality are anticipated.

4.6 Noise

Noise is generally defined as unwanted sound. Sound is most commonly measured in decibels (dB) on the A-weighted scale, which is the scale most similar to the range of sounds that the human ear can hear. The Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) is an average measure of sound. The DNL descriptor is accepted by federal agencies as a standard for estimating sound impacts and establishing guidelines for compatible land uses. EPA guidelines, and those of many other federal agencies, state that outdoor sound levels in excess of 55 dB DNL are “normally unacceptable” for noise-sensitive land uses including residences, schools, or hospitals (EPA, 1974).

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, short-term increases in noise levels are anticipated during demolition of the former MSU Extension Service and the MDOC P&P Office/Jackson County EC buildings; these buildings are located adjacent to an abandoned public high school and within a residential area. To reduce noise levels, demolition activities would take place during normal business hours. Equipment and machinery utilized at the project sites would meet all local, state, and federal noise regulations. No long-term increases in noise level are anticipated.



Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, short-term increases in noise levels are anticipated during the demolition and construction period. The former MSU Extension Service and the MDOC P&P Office/Jackson County EC buildings, which will be demolished, are located adjacent to an abandoned public high school and within a residential area. The proposed MDOC P&P Office site on Kenneth Avenue is located in a primarily commercial/industrial part of town. To reduce noise levels, demolition and construction activities would take place during normal business hours. Equipment and machinery utilized at the project sites would meet all local, state, and federal noise regulations. No construction activities will take place at the Amonett Street site and no short-term increases in noise level are anticipated at that site. No long-term increases in noise levels are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

4.7 Biological Resources

The former MSU Extension Service and MDOC P&P Office/Jackson County EC properties located on Pascagoula Street are previously disturbed and developed sites that consist of the damaged buildings, maintained lawns, and paved parking areas. The proposed MDOC P&P site on Kenneth Avenue is a previously disturbed and developed site. Currently, approximately 40% of the site is paved and used for parking. The remainder of the site is comprised of a maintained lawn. The Amonett Street site is comprised of the existing building and parking lots, with isolated landscaping.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) lists the following federally endangered and threatened animal species for Jackson County (USFWS, 2008):

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status
Louisiana black bear	<i>Ursus americanus luteolus</i>	T
Piping plover	<i>Charadrius melodus</i>	T (CH)
Gopher tortoise	<i>Gopherus polyphemus</i>	T
Gulf sturgeon	<i>Acipenser oxyrhynchus desotoi</i>	T (CH)
Green sea turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>	T
Loggerhead sea turtle	<i>Caretta caretta</i>	T
Yellow-blotched map turtle	<i>Graptemys flavimaculata</i>	T
Mississippi gopher frog	<i>Rana capito sevosa</i>	E
Louisiana quillwort	<i>Isoetes louisianensis</i>	E
Leatherback sea turtle	<i>Dermochelys comacea</i>	E
Kemp's ridley sea turtle	<i>Lepidochelys kempii</i>	E
Alabama red-bellied turtle	<i>Psuedemys alabamensis</i>	E
West Indian manatee	<i>Trichechus manatus</i>	E
Brown pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	E
Mississippi sandhill crane	<i>Grus canadensis pulla</i>	E (CH)
Red-cockaded woodpecker	<i>Picoides borealis</i>	E
T = threatened, E = endangered, (CH) = listed with critical habitat		

A site visit conducted on March 5, 2009, confirmed that all of the project sites are previously disturbed and developed. The sites provide little wildlife habitat and do not contain habitat for any federally listed threatened or endangered species. Species likely to use the projects sites would be those common to suburban areas; it is unlikely that any threatened or endangered species are present.

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, some wildlife habitat would be provided when the former MSU Extension Service and MDOC P&P Office/Jackson County EC properties located on Pascagoula Street are returned to grade and revegetated.

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, approximately 0.45 acre of maintained lawn at the proposed MDOC facility on Kenneth Avenue will be utilized for construction of the new facility. No land-use changes will occur at the Amonett Street site. The former MSU Extension Service and MDOC P&P Office/Jackson County EC properties located on Pascagoula Street will be returned to grade and revegetated.

No impacts to threatened or endangered species are anticipated. A consultation letter requesting project review was sent to the USFWS on February 12, 2009 (Appendix C). In a response letter dated February 23, 2009, USFWS stated that there are no federally listed endangered, threatened, or candidate species present (Appendix C).

4.8 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 actions on historic properties and provide the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) an opportunity to comment on federal projects that will have an effect on historic properties prior to implementation. Historic properties are defined as archeological sites, standing structures, or other historic resources listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

On March 5, 2009, a FEMA Archaeologist and Architectural Historian, both qualified under the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards (36 CFR Part 61) in their respective disciplines, conducted an assessment of the project's potential to affect historic properties within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the damaged building sites and the proposed relocation sites. The APE is the geographic area within which an undertaking may directly or indirectly cause changes in the character or use of historic properties, if such properties exist. For archaeological resources, the APE consists of the legal land parcels of the former and proposed project sites; for above-ground historic properties, the APE is extended to a 0.5-mile radius around each of the former and proposed project sites. This APE was previously established through FEMA consultation with the Mississippi State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). A site visit to the proposed and former project sites revealed that none of the sites is located within the boundaries of a listed or eligible National Register Historic District.

In a letter to Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) dated January 29, 2009, FEMA determined that the former MSU Extension Service and MDOC P&P Office/Jackson County EC buildings located on Pascagoula Street do not meet the criteria for listing in the National Register, either individually or as part of a historic district.



There are three buildings that appear to be approximately 50 years of age within the APE of the proposed MDOC project site. These structures are interspersed with recently constructed commercial and government buildings. The historic structures include the Adult Learning Center, a motel complex, and a yellow brick warehouse; all are believed to have been constructed ca. 1960. The Adult Learning Center, located across the street from the proposed relocation site, is a red brick, one-story building typical in style and form of municipal buildings of the period. The construction date of the motel complex is not known, but it also appears to date to ca. 1960. It consists of three separate, one-story units. The large one-story, yellow brick, industrial building is visible to the southeast across the railroad tracks. None of these buildings are known to possess historical significance under any of the National Register criteria.

The proposed MDOC project site on Kenneth Avenue is level and shows evidence of prior disturbance (water/sewer lines that were in use for the previous trailers, surface areas of exposed subsoil and/or fill episodes, utility poles, and pavement). A review of the MDAH site and survey files shows there are no previously recorded sites within the project area and no archaeological surveys have been conducted that include the project area. The closest surveys were within 2,000 feet to the south and were completed for sections of Route 90 (95-088, 98-196, and 01-079). No archeological sites were recorded during these surveys. The closest previously recorded sites are the Scholtes Site (22JA506) and Spanish Fort/La Pointe/Krebs House (22JA526). The Scholtes Site is recorded as a shell midden located 0.5 mile to the north on a back swamp of the present-day Krebs Lake; the exact location is unknown. The Spanish Fort/La Pointe/Krebs House site is located approximately 1.0 mile to the northwest. The site has European and Native American components and is also located on an ox bow of the Pascagoula River on Krebs Lake. Because the proposed MDOC project site has been previously disturbed and partially paved and no archeological sites have been recorded within 0.5 mile, FEMA has determined there is a low probability for intact archeological remains to exist there.

The Amonett Street Building, a brown brick, one-story office structure constructed in 1979, is not considered to possess the exceptional importance required for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria Consideration G for properties less than 50 years of age.

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, the former MSU Extension Service and MDOC P&P Office/Jackson County EC buildings located on Pascagoula Street would be demolished. In a letter dated February 2, 2009, MDAH concurred that demolition of these buildings would not result in an adverse effect on historic properties (Appendix C). FEMA recommends the use of Lower-Impact Demolition Requirements, developed by FEMA and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), for demolition activities at these sites to avoid adverse effects to archaeological resources, if present.

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, no impacts to archeological or cultural resources are anticipated. In a letter dated February 2, 2009, MDAH concurred that demolition of the former MSU Extension Service and MDOC P&P Office/Jackson County EC buildings located on Pascagoula Street would not result in an adverse effect on historic properties (Appendix C). FEMA recommends the use of Lower-Impact Demolition Requirements, developed by FEMA and MEMA, for demolition activities at these sites to avoid adverse effects to archeological resources, if present. FEMA has determined that the proposed MDOC project site APE contains a low probability for intact archeological resources to occur and contains no historic resources eligible for listing in the National Register.



The acquisition and renovation of the Amonett Street Building are not anticipated to require ground disturbing activities; therefore, FEMA has determined that no adverse effects to archeological resources, if present, would occur there.

Consultation letters, dated April 28, 2009 were sent to the Mississippi Department of Archive and History (MDAH) and the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians requesting project review and concurrence with FEMA's determination of No Historic Properties Affected by the proposed project (Appendix C). In a response letter date May 14, 2009, MDAH concurred that no cultural resources are likely to be affected by the proposed project (Appendix C). No response from THPO has been received to date.

5.0 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

According to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, cumulative impacts represent the "impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time (40 CFR 1508.7)." In accordance with NEPA and to the extent reasonable and practical, this EA considered the combined effect of the Proposed Action Alternative and other actions occurring or proposed in the vicinity of the proposed project site.

Pascagoula and the entire Mississippi Gulf coast are undergoing recovery efforts after Hurricane Katrina caused extensive damages. The recovery efforts in Pascagoula include demolition, reconstruction, and new construction. These projects and the proposed project may have a cumulative temporary impact on air quality in Pascagoula by increasing criteria pollutants during construction activities. No other cumulative effects are anticipated.

6.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

FEMA is the lead federal agency for conducting the NEPA compliance process for the proposed project in Pascagoula, Mississippi. It is the goal of the lead agency to expedite the preparation and review of NEPA documents and to be responsive to the needs of the community and the purpose and need of the proposed action while meeting the intent of NEPA and complying with all NEPA provisions.

Jackson County will notify the public of the availability of the draft EA through publication of a public notice in a local newspaper. FEMA will conduct an expedited public comment period commencing on the initial date of publication of the public notice.

7.0 AGENCY COORDINATION AND PERMITS

The following agencies and organizations were contacted by letter requesting project review during the preparation of this EA. Responses received to date are included in Appendix C.

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District, Regulatory Division
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service



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- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4, Water Management Division
 - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Jackson Field Office
 - Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce
 - Mississippi Department of Archives and History (State Historic Preservation Office)
 - Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (Tribal Historic Preservation Office)
 - Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Pollution Control, Environmental Permits Division
 - Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, Bureau of Wetlands Permitting
 - Mississippi Department of Transportation, Environmental Division
 - Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission

In accordance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations, the applicant would be responsible for acquiring any necessary permits prior to commencing construction at the proposed project site.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

No impacts to geology, groundwater, floodplains, public health and safety, hazardous materials, socioeconomic resources, environmental justice, or cultural resources are anticipated under the Proposed Action Alternative.

During the construction period, short-term impacts to soils, surface water, transportation, air quality, and noise are anticipated. All short-term impacts will be mitigated utilizing BMPs, such as silt fences, proper equipment maintenance, and appropriate signage. No long-term impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed project. Beneficial impacts to floodplains are anticipated as the proposed project would reduce occupancy within the floodplain.

9.0 REFERENCES

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Appendix A

Figures

Appendix B

Site Photographs

Appendix C

Agency Coordination