

**Federal Emergency Management Agency  
(FEMA)**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)  
for  
Construction of City of Gulf Breeze's  
Wastewater Treatment Plant  
Santa Rosa County, Florida  
FEMA-1551-DR-FL**

**Background**

The City of Gulf Breeze has applied to FEMA for assistance with the construction of a wastewater treatment facility in Santa Rosa County, Florida. A new wastewater treatment facility is needed in order to accommodate projected growth and the resulting increased need in Santa Rosa County. The existing South Santa Rosa Utility wastewater treatment facility was designed to treat 2.0 million gallons per day of wastewater. Population and customer growth is expected to result in the capacity of the wastewater treatment facility being exceeded by need near the end of 2013 or beginning of 2014. Additionally, many of the existing septic systems are impacting groundwater quality of surface drainages, including the East Bay of Pensacola Bay. Construction of a new wastewater treatment facility would provide an opportunity for existing residents to decommission these septic tanks/drain fields, which would improve groundwater and surface water quality, and ecological conditions in East Bay. The wastewater treatment facility would allow for utilization by new development, thereby avoiding the need to install new, additional septic systems within the area.

The City of Gulf Breeze is proposing to construct a 25-acre wastewater treatment facility on a 42-acre parcel of land located in the northwestern portion of the City. The proposed facility would be located on property bordered by Bergren Road (west), River Branch Road (south and east), and Clay Circle (north), the center of which is at latitude 30.4143, longitude -86.9734. The active portion of the wastewater treatment facility would cover approximately ten acres of land and would be screened from public view by a 100-foot wide vegetated buffer.

Effluent discharge would be land applied at the Santa Rosa County Utility System's existing wastewater treatment facility's spray field ERS-4. The proposed construction of the new facility would include a gravity line sewer system along Bergren Road and Clay Circle; all new sewer piping would be located within County or State-owned road right-of-ways. No new lift stations would be necessary.

**Findings**

The purpose of the EA is to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project, and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

In accordance with 44 CFR Part 10.8 (d)(3)(x), FEMA has determined that the proposed alternative would not have significant individual or cumulative impacts; nor would it promote significant secondary adverse effects. No significant adverse impacts to groundwater or surface water; floodplains; wetlands or jurisdictional waters of the U.S.; terrestrial resources or wildlife; state or federally protected species; socioeconomics (including minority and low income populations); or cultural resources would occur.

Construction of a wastewater treatment facility would have a beneficial effect on the environment by providing wastewater treatment to new development that is expected to occur. Additionally, it will result in the potential for the removal of existing septic tank systems that are currently impacting groundwater and the surface water of East Bay of the Pensacola Bay. Construction of a wastewater treatment facility would have a negative impact on the upland sand-hill community currently located within the footprint of the proposed facility. This impact would not be significant because this ecosystem is still plentiful in the State of Florida.

The Draft EA was made available to interested parties through publication on FEMA's website (<http://www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/envdocuments/ea-region4.shtm>) and by distribution at Santa Rosa County South Annex Building, Gulf Breeze City Hall, and Santa Rosa County, Clerk of Courts. Notification of availability of the Draft EA was published in the *Gulf Breeze News* newspaper on August 13, 2009.

The following summarizes what is outlined in the EA as conditions that must be met as part of implementing this proposed action.

1. The applicant and their contractors must comply with all applicable permit and project conditions, including, but not limited to those required by the FL DEP permit (FLA399850-001-DW1P/NP); the FL DEP Wetland Resource Permit (WRP 57-0272487-001-DE); and USACE permit [SAJ-2007-386 (NW-SWA)].
2. Per Santa Rosa County ordinances, all structures within the wastewater treatment facility must be less than 35 feet in height; a 100-foot wide landscape buffer must be installed at the property perimeter.
3. To minimize any possible adverse impacts to cultural resources, an archaeologist must be present to monitor any ground disturbing activities in the vicinity of Sites 8SR1913 and SR1914. Should significant cultural features or artifacts be discovered during archaeological monitoring, the archaeologist doing the monitoring shall be empowered to redirect construction activities away from the area. Any cultural resources discovered as a result of the project must be reinterred on site, as close as possible to the location of discovery. A field report documenting the monitoring and any discoveries will be required at project close-out.
4. In the event that fortuitous finds or unexpected discoveries, such as prehistoric or historic artifacts, including pottery or ceramics, stone tools or metal implements, or other physical remains that could be associated with North American cultures or early colonial or American settlement are encountered at any time within the project area, the project

