



FEMA

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

North Idaho Correctional Institute Multi Hazard Mitigation Project
Idaho Department of Corrections
FEMA-PDMC-PJ-10-ID-2010-001

The Idaho Department of Corrections has applied for fiscal year 2010 funding under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Pre-Disaster Mitigation-Competitive (PDM-C) grant program for a multi hazard mitigation project at the North Idaho Correctional Institution (NICI). The grant program is administered by FEMA to fund pre-disaster mitigation planning and projects that primarily address natural hazards. The mitigation project at the NICI critical State prison facility in Idaho County includes reducing risks for facility damage and operation disruptions caused by wildfires and severe storms.

The Proposed Action would create defensible space, replace wood siding with fire-resistant siding, bury power lines, and install backup generators. The first activity would create a defensible space around the perimeter of the facility by removing small trees and brush within approximately 75 feet of the perimeter fence. Fuel reduction activities on the remaining 30 acres of the facility would minimize the volume of vegetation beyond the defensible space and focus primarily on tree removal, thinning, and clearing. Trees larger than 12 inches in diameter at breast height (DBH) would remain. There would be an approximately 20-foot spacing between the remaining trees after removal of trees smaller than 12 inches DBH along with removal of all of the White fir in the project area. Branches within 20 feet of the ground would be removed from the remaining trees, and the understory would be slashed. Mechanized equipment proposed to be used includes logging trucks/booms. Vegetation removal activities would be done by hand using chainsaws and hand saws. Work would be performed by NICI staff, a trained inmate fire crew from another Idaho Department of Correction institution, and private contractors as needed. Access to vegetation removal areas would be via existing established dirt roads. An herbicide, approved by the IDL, would be applied along the existing dirt roads to promote a grass understory (as opposed to the existing brushy understory). Slash material would likely be chipped and used as fuel for the facility's sweat lodge.

The second activity would involve replacing approximately 64,000 square feet of wood siding on the at-risk structures with fire-resistant material. Siding would be replaced on all of the buildings except for Unit 4. The third activity would protect critical infrastructure from severe winter storms by burying the power lines (about 3,264 linear feet) that run into and through the facility. This would be performed in conjunction with the local power co-op. Trenching, with an excavator, of the power lines would require approximately 725 cubic yards of excavation for trenches 3 feet wide by 2 feet deep. The fourth activity would be to install three emergency generators: one for Unit 4/command center, one for the main water well, and one for Unit 3/kitchen. Generator installation would entail pouring a 10-foot by 10-foot concrete slab and erecting a fence. The generators would be approximately 5 to 9 feet tall and 5 to 9 feet wide.

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In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and FEMA's implementing regulations, FEMA prepared a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) to identify and evaluate potential environmental effects resulting from the alternatives presented in the EA and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). Alternatives evaluated in the EA include: 1) No Action, and 2) the Proposed Action to reduce facility wildfire and severe storm risks. Other alternatives were considered but not carried forth and are described in the EA. The Draft EA was made available for public review and comment on April 6, 2011; no substantive comments were received. The Proposed Action is the preferred alternative because the No Action alternative would not address the purpose and need stated in the Draft EA and there are no other practical alternatives were identified. Thus, the proposed action is selected.

FINDINGS

Based upon the PDM grant application, preliminary site design, Final EA, and Attachment A and in accordance with 1) FEMA's regulations in 44 CFR Part 10 for environmental consideration, including Executive Orders (EOs) addressing floodplains (EO 11988), wetlands (EO 11990), and environmental justice (EO 12898); and 2) the Council of Environmental Quality's regulations in 40 CFR Chapter 5 for implementing NEPA, FEMA determined the proposed project will not significantly affect the quality of the natural and human environment. As a result of this FONSI, an EIS will not be prepared (44 CFR Part 10.8) and the project, as described in the grant application and attached EA, may proceed.

APPROVAL



Mark G. Eberlein
Regional Environmental Officer
FEMA Region 10

7-6-11

Date

Attachment A:

PERMITTING, PROJECT CONDITIONS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

The Idaho Department of Corrections shall comply with the following project conditions and mitigation measures:

- In order to minimize potential impacts to nesting birds, the timing of vegetation removal activities will be restricted to the non-breeding season. This is considered October 1 to May 1 each year, or as determined by a local qualified biologist.
- The boundaries of clearing will be clearly marked and restricted to the areas identified in the EA.
- The Department is responsible for selecting, implementing, monitoring, and maintaining BMPs to control erosion and sediment, reduce spills and pollution, and provide habitat protection.
- All equipment will be cleaned and inspected by the operator prior to arriving on site to reduce the potential spread of noxious or invasive plant species.
- Fuels reduction shall be conducted in conjunction with the IDL and the Idaho County Disaster Mitigation Office.
- The generators shall use a double-walled tank (Convault or similar) to minimize fuel leakage.
- The generators shall be used exclusively for emergency purposes, be operated less than 500 hours per year, and be fueled by natural gas, propane gas, liquefied petroleum gas, distillate fuel oils, residual fuel oils, or diesel fuel; waste oil, gasoline, or refined gasoline shall not be used (Idaho Administrative Procedures Act 58.01.01.222.d).
- Any change to the approved scope of work will require re-evaluation for compliance with NEPA and other laws and Executive Orders.
- In the event that potentially significant cultural resources are discovered during project activities, and in compliance with State and Federal laws protecting cultural resources, including Section 106 of the NHPA, work in the immediate vicinity shall cease, the area secured, and the SHPO and FEMA notified.