

Draft Environmental Assessment

Ben Geren Regional Park Safe Room

HGMP-DR-1819-AR Project #52
Fort Smith, Sebastian County, Arkansas

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ABB	American Burying Beetle
ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADEM	Arkansas Department of Emergency Management
ADEQ	Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality
AGS	Arkansas Geological Survey
AHPO	Arkansas Historic Preservation Office
AHPP	Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
APE	Area of Potential Effect
BGEPA	Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act
BMP	Best Management Practices
CAA	Clean Air Act
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CO	Carbon Monoxide
CWA	Clean Water Act
dB	decibels
DNL	Day-Night Average Sound Level
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EO	Executive Order
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FCRA	Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act
FWCA	Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act
GPO	Government Printing Office
HMGP	Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MPIS	Multiple Project Information Sheet
NAA	No Action Alternative
NAAQS	national ambient air quality standards
NCDC	National Climatic Data Center
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NO ₂	Nitrogen Dioxide
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	National Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
O ₃	Ozone
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PAA	Proposed Action Alternative
Pb	Lead
PM _{2.5} , PM ₁₀	Particulate Matter

Acronyms and Abbreviations

RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RUS	Rural Utilities Service
SCS	Soil Conservation Service
SFHA	Special Flood Hazard Area
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SO ₂	Sulfur Dioxide
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
THPO	Tribal Historic Preservation Offices
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USCB	United States Census Bureau
USCB	United States Census Bureau
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
VOC	Volatile Organic Compound

SECTION ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The project being reviewed is a proposed safe room to be built for Sebastian County, Arkansas, in the City of Fort Smith. The county has applied for funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), through the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (ADEM). The grant number for the project is HMGP-DR-1819-AR Project #52. This Environmental Assessment has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the President's Council on Environmental Quality regulations to implement NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 1500-1508), and FEMA's regulations implementing NEPA (44 CFR Part 10). FEMA is required to consider potential environmental impacts before funding or approving actions and projects. The purpose of this EA is to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the Ben Geren Regional Park Safe Room. FEMA will use the findings in this EA to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

SECTION TWO PURPOSE AND NEED

2.1 PURPOSE

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) was created to compliment FEMA's disaster response activities. The purpose of HMGP is to provide an opportunity during the reconstruction process following a disaster for states to implement mitigation measures to reduce the risk of loss of life and property from future disasters. HMGP is authorized under Section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. In 1993, the State of Arkansas became the first state to create its own hazard mitigation fund through Amendment 1049 to act 511. Together, these two programs urge local governments and citizens to take initiative to mitigate the impacts of disasters.

2.2 NEED

In 2005, FEMA approved The Sebastian County, Arkansas Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. The purpose of the plan was to make Sebastian County and its citizens less vulnerable to the effects of natural hazards through a coordinated approach to mitigation policy and state and local mitigation planning activities. Protecting lives and property from the risk of tornadoes has been identified as a priority need in the mitigation plan.

Fort Smith, Arkansas is located in Wind Zone IV, which is prone to winds up to 250 miles per hour (FEMA, 2010a). There is a need to protect the residents and the general public in the southwestern portion of Fort Smith, Arkansas and visitors to Ben Geren Regional Park (Park) from the risk of tornadoes and other high wind events. There are approximately 855 residential structures within a mile of the park and 257 within a half mile. Ben Geren Regional Park is home to numerous athletic facilities, including soccer and softball fields, as well as tennis and volleyball courts. The park is also home to a gator golf complex and a 27-hole golf course, as well as multiple other attractions, which keep the park busy nearly year round. However, the expansive park and surrounding area offer little shelter should severe weather come about. In addition to residents and those visiting the park, students and faculty at Bost, a community program which provides early intervention, educational services, and all disciplines of therapy for adults and children with developmental disabilities, currently have no safe room from a tornado.

According to the National Climatic Data Center (NCDC) of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), 25 tornadoes have been recorded in Sebastian County since 1954. In that same time, nearly \$160 million in damages has occurred. Of this total, \$156 million has occurred since 1995. In one tornado in 1996, 40 people in Fort Smith alone were injured, and two children were killed. This particular storm caused over \$150 million in damages, destroying or heavily damaging nearly 2,000 homes and 200 businesses.

All buildings that are not designed to withstand high winds are susceptible to damage from tornadoes. Because the vast majority of homes and businesses in the area were not

constructed to withstand tornado strength winds, mostly due to cost or age of the homes, there is a great need to be able to keep safe those who live and work there.

SECTION THREE ALTERNATIVES

3.1 EXPLANATION OF ALTERNATIVES

To address the need to protect patrons of Ben Geren Regional Park (Park) and people living and working in the surrounding community during severe weather events, the following three alternatives were considered: no action alternative; construction of a new safe room (proposed action); and retrofitting an existing Park building.

3.2 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE (NAA)

This alternative looks at the option to continue with what is currently in place to provide safety for the area. There is no financial investment required in choosing not to go forward with the project, however, patrons of the park will continue to be in danger when quickly arising storms target the area. In addition, those living or working in the area will continue to have to depend on their homes or businesses, many of which contain no storm safe areas, for their protection.

3.3 PROPOSED ACTION ALTERNATIVE (PAA)

In FEMA 342 (Midwest Tornadoes of May 3, 1999: Observations, Recommendations and Technical Guidance), it was concluded that “Shelters are the best means of providing near-absolute protection for individuals who are attempting to take refuge in a tornado.” In order to best satisfy the need for shelter for local residents and park patrons, Sebastian County has proposed constructing a safe room at the northeast corner of the Park (Latitude: 35.32429; Longitude:94.34818) on what is currently a 1.5 acre mowed open area. The entire proposed action, including safe room, parking areas, driveways, and utility connections will be contained within this 1.5 acre area. The dimensions of the proposed safe room would be approximately 92 feet by 68 feet, with an approximate gross square footage of 6,225 feet and usable safe area of 5,291 square feet for the safe room. The building will contain a large multi-purpose area that can be divided by partitions when needed. There will be a men’s and women’s restroom, a storage room, two mechanical rooms, and another room which would be used as an office, as well as a first aid room. The multi-purpose area, combined with the bathrooms, make up the area that would be used as shelter. The safe room would accommodate 981 occupants, assuming five (5) square feet per person in the open area. Parking for 105 vehicles would be provided on the on the new site, in addition to existing parking available in the park near the proposed safe room. Utilities will be provided to the new site. Water, sewer, and electric are all already available in the park near the proposed site and minimal extensions will need to be made. There will be two 22-foot-wide driveways connecting to the existing Park Entrance Loop, at the north and south ends of the site. This safe room should be able to provide safety for visitors to the park at any given time, as well as local

residents and employees who wish to use the safe room. There are 855 residential structures within one mile of the proposed project location. Residents in the area would always have the option of using the safe room space during severe weather.

The safe room would be built in accordance with FEMA 361: Design and Construction Guidance for Community Safe Rooms (FEMA 2010b). The project would also be designed in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). See Appendix B for project maps and preliminary design plans.

3.4 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND DISMISSED

3.4.1 Retrofit Existing Building

This alternative consisted of taking the existing community building already in use in the park and retrofitting it to conform to safe room guidelines. The cost required to alter the foundation, frame, connections, roofing, and nearly every other structural aspect of the current building to be in compliance with FEMA 361 (2010b) makes this alternative much less desirable. Complexity of staging multiple phases, as well as possible asbestos removal limits the feasibility of this alternative.

SECTION FOUR AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND IMPACTS

This section describes the potential impacts of the proposed action on environmental resources and historic properties, and describes proposed mitigation that would address those impacts. A summary of identified impacts is provided in Table 1.

4.1 PHYSICAL RESOURCES

4.1.1 Geology and Soils

The project area is located in eastern Fort Smith in Sebastian County, Arkansas, which lies in the Arkansas River Valley. The Arkansas River Valley represents the northernmost border of the Ouachita Mountain system in Arkansas. The area is dominated by Pennsylvanian Period sedimentary rock, consisting mostly of layers of shale and sandstone. The general structure is east-west trending open folds and faults (AGS).

According to the U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-minute topographic map of the Barling quadrangle, the project site is between 420 and 426 feet above mean seal level (amsl). Surface topography slopes locally to the south and east (USGS).

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) online Web Soil Survey indicates the project location is made up primarily of Wrightsville-Messer complex soils. According to the USDA Soil Conservation Service (SCS), slopes in this area range from zero to three percent. The complex is 55 to 70

percent level Wrightsville soils in areas between low mounds, and 20 to 35 percent Messer soils on rounded mounds two to three feet above the Wrightsville soils, and is generally 60 to 80 feet in diameter. This series generally consists of a top layer of silt loam, followed by silty clay (Ferguson, 1975).

The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) was passed in 1981 as part of the Agriculture and Food Act (Subtitle I of Title XV, Section 1539-1549). The FPPA is intended to minimize the impact federal programs have on the unnecessary and irreversible conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses. It assures that, to the extent possible, federal programs are administered to be compatible with state, local units of government, and private programs and policies to protect farmland. The area of the proposed project does not meet farmland criteria because it has been designated as a park, as explained in a letter received June 17, 2010 from the NRCS (see Appendix A).

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no impacts to or from geology or soils.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, short-term impacts to soil would occur during construction. Most work will occur at the surface, but minimal amounts of trenching will be needed in order to extend utilities to the site. Appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs), such as installing silt fencing and revegetating bare soils immediately upon completion of construction to stabilize soils will be implemented in accordance with the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit that will be required under the Clean Water Act (see Section 4.2.1). Graded soil and waste materials will be managed in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations. An engineering analysis performed in June 2010 did not indicate any soil stability issues at the project site and indicates that a soil preparation analysis will be performed at the time of construction. No adverse impacts to the safe room or any connected features such as parking lots and driveways are anticipated due to soil instability.

4.1.2 Air Quality

Under the Clean Air Act (CAA), states are required to adopt ambient air quality standards. These have been established to protect the public from potentially harmful amounts of pollutants. Under the CAA, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (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 ecosystems 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 EPA, Dane County is in attainment for all six criteria pollutants, meaning that criteria air pollutants do not exceed the NAAQS (EPA, 2008).

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no impacts to air quality.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, construction activities would cause short-term impacts to the air quality of the area. To reduce the temporary impacts, contractors would be required to water down construction areas as needed in order to mitigate excess dust spreading. The levels of some pollutants, such as CO, NO₂, O₃, PM₁₀ and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) could be elevated in the area temporarily due to emissions from fuel-burning vehicles on site (e.g. heavy equipment and earthmoving machinery). To reduce emissions, vehicle running times on site would be kept to a minimum and engines would be properly maintained.

4.2.1 WATER RESOURCES

4.2.1 Surface Water

The Clean Water Act (CWA), as amended in 1977, set standards to limit the amount of pollutants allowed to be discharged into U.S. waterways. The proposed site sits at a surface elevation ranging from 420 feet to 426 feet above mean sea level. In general, it slopes south and east and runoff from the site runs into Massard Creek to the east, either directly, or via a ditch about 250 feet south of the proposed site location. Massard Creek ranges from about 400 to 500 feet away from the proposed site, to the east. The creek runs north and eventually empties into the Arkansas River.

The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) assessed that the proposed project is environmentally sound and in compliance with state and federal laws. In a letter dated May 21, 2010, the ADEQ stipulated that if the construction site will disturb more than one (1) acre, Sebastian County must comply with the terms of the Stormwater Construction General Permit APR150000 prior to the start of construction (see Appendix A).

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no impacts to surface water.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, there would be no direct permanent impacts on the surface water quality of the area. However, short-term impacts to downstream surface waters, due to erosion of soil, are possible during construction. The Applicant would be required to submit an SWPPP and NPDES permit prior to construction. To reduce impacts to surface water, BMPs, including installing silt fencing in appropriate locations and revegetating bare ground immediately following completion of construction, will be implemented in accordance with the SWPPP and NPDES permit. At approximately 1.5 acres, the area to be disturbed is greater than one (1) acre, and therefore will be required to comply with the terms of Stormwater Construction General Permit APR150000 prior to construction.

4.2.2 Wetlands

Executive Order (EO) 11990, Protection of Wetlands, directs federal agencies to take actions to minimize the destruction, loss, or degradation of 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 Clean Water Act. Wetlands are identified as those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Under Section 404 of the CWA, a permit is required from the USACE for any activities involving the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S., including wetlands and tidally influenced waters. Dependent on the scope and type of impacts to waters of the U.S., authorizations may be in one of three primary forms: general permit, a letter of permission, or a standard individual permit. If an applicant has a project either in or near a water body, the applicant is required to fill out and submit the Multiple Project Information Sheet (MPIS) to the USACE and ADEQ to establish which permit(s), if any, will be required. A letter describing the proposed project was sent to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) on May 14, 2010. A return letter was received May 27, 2010, confirming the project area is not located within a wetland (see Appendix A).

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no impacts to wetlands.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, there would be no impacts to wetlands because there are no wetlands present at or near the project site.

4.2.3 Floodplain

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 (NFIP). The proposed project site is outside the 100-year floodplain, and is located in Zone X (Community Panel Number 05131C0130E, effective May 20, 2010; see Appendix B). However, the site is located in close proximity (within approximately 100 feet) of a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) (Zone A/100-year floodplain).

The Arkansas State NFIP Coordinator was also contacted regarding potential impacts of the proposed project to or from the floodplain. He agreed the project was not within a SFHA, but recommended extra precautions be taken to ensure the site is safe from flooding because of the close proximity to Zone A (see Appendix B).

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no impacts to or from the floodplain.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, no impacts to the floodplain are anticipated. The Applicant will ensure that the grading plan developed for the safe room project is strictly followed during construction so that the site is not in danger of flooding.

4.3 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

4.3.1 Threatened and Endangered Species and Critical Habitat

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 provides a program for the conservation of threatened and endangered species and the habitats in which they are found. Section 7 of the ESA requires federal agencies, in consultation with the USFWS and/or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), 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 American Burying Beetle (*Nicrophorus americanus*) (ABB) and the Interior Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum athalassos*) are federally listed endangered species that are known to occur in Sebastian County, Arkansas. Habitat requirements for the ABB are currently not fully understood. They have been found in various environments; including oak-pine woodlands, open fields, oak-hickory forest, open grasslands, and edge habitat (<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/oklahoma/beetle1.htm>). A letter from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), dated December 2, 2010, explains that projects with ground-disturbing activities of less than three (3) acres have less than a one percent (1%) chance of encountering an ABB. Projects less than three (3) acres do not require a survey or trap/relocation activities (see Appendix A). Critical habitat has not been designated for the ABB.

The Interior Least Tern is a bird whose habitat includes barren to sparsely vegetated sandbars along rivers, sand and gravel pits, or lake and reservoir shorelines. Critical habitat has not been designated for the Interior Least Tern.

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no impacts to threatened or endangered species or critical habitat.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, less than three acres will be disturbed by construction, and therefore, there is less than a one percent chance that the American Burying Beetle will be encountered. The project site does not contain habitat features that are suitable for the Interior Least Tern. Furthermore, an initial response letter from USFWS regarding the proposed project, dated June 15, 2010, noted that “no federally listed endangered, threatened, or candidate species” were present at the proposed project site (see Appendix A). For these reasons, FEMA has determined that there would be no effect to federally listed endangered or threatened species under this alternative. No critical habitat is present at the proposed project site, therefore, there will not be adverse modification of critical habitat as a result of the proposed action.

4.3.2 Wildlife and Fish

The Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA) provides the basic authority for the Fish and Wildlife Service's involvement in evaluating impacts to fish and wildlife from proposed water resource development projects. It requires that fish and wildlife resources

receive equal consideration to other project features. It also requires federal agencies that construct, license or permit water resource development projects to first consult with the Service (and the National Marine Fisheries Service in some instances) and State fish and wildlife agency regarding the impacts on fish and wildlife resources and measures to mitigate these impacts.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act was implemented in 1918 between the U.S. and Great Britain for the protection of migratory birds. Later amendments added treaties with Japan, Mexico and the Soviet Union (now Russia). Under the Act, taking, killing or possessing migratory birds is unlawful. In conjunction with this, The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) prohibits any form of possession or taking of both bald and golden eagles. The statute imposes criminal and civil sanctions as well as an enhanced penalty provision for subsequent offenses. Further, the BGEPA provides for the forfeiture of anything used to acquire eagles in violation of the statute. The statute excludes from its prohibitions on possession the use of eagles or eagle parts for exhibition, scientific, and Indian religious uses.

Sebastian County is listed by the USFWS as a home to the bald eagle. The bald eagle is generally found in deciduous forest or near large bodies of water with many fish.

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no impacts to fish or wildlife.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, there would be no impacts to fish because the project would not take place in or near water. Impacts to the American bald eagle and other wildlife are not anticipated. The project will involve the removal of grass and a few trees, which is not suitable habitat for bald eagles.

4.4 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. Historic properties are prehistoric or historic districts, sites, buildings, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), maintained by the Department of the Interior, National Park Service (NPS). The Area of Potential Effect (APE) of a federal undertaking is the geographic area or areas within which an undertaking may directly or indirectly cause changes in the character or use of historic properties, if any such properties exist. The APE for the Proposed Action Alternative, as shown in diagrams presented to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in a May 14, 2010 letter (see Appendix A), consists of the 1.5 acre site, as well as the corridor through which utilities will be extended to the project location from nearby lines. The project is not located within or near an historic district and there are no structures in the area that are eligible for listing on the NRHP. In a letter dated May 20, 2010, the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (SHPO) concurred with FEMA's established APE and indicated that no known historic properties would be affected by the proposed project (see Appendix A).

Based on conversations with the SHPO and according to the Native American Consultation Database, the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma; the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma; the Osage Nation, Oklahoma; and the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes, Oklahoma, are four federally recognized tribes that might have potential tribal interests in Sebastian County, Arkansas. The APE for the Proposed Action Alternative does not include or affect any official tribal lands (i.e. all lands within the exterior boundaries of any Indian reservation and all dependent Indian communities [36 CFR part 800]), according to Indian Reservations in the Continental United States (USGS, 1993) and Indian Land Areas Judicially Established 1978 (BIA, 1996).

The project site is located less than 1,000 feet from a 7,000 acre plot of land that was originally part of Fort Chaffee and that was deeded to local communities for redevelopment after the closure of the fort in 1997. The remaining 65,000 acres of the fort were leased to the Arkansas Army National Guard. During the federal Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) initiative, no tribes made claims to historic properties with religious or cultural significance within the fort. While the safe room project site is not officially part of the land considered in the BRAC, it is reasonable to assume that no tribal interests exist at the project site, which is in immediate proximity to the lands considered.

Finally, Sebastian County was declared as eligible for federal assistance under disaster DR-1751-AR in 2008 and DR-1354-AR in 2000. Early in the response phases, FEMA historic preservation staff sent consultation letters to federally recognized tribes with potential interests in the various declared counties. These tribes included the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma; the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma; the Osage Nation, Oklahoma; and the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes, Oklahoma, in Sebastian County, Arkansas. None of these four tribes responded to notify FEMA staff of any tribal interests in Sebastian County.

Therefore, based on FEMA's knowledge of and previous experience and work in the project area under Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation Assistance programs; the outcome of the tribal consultation process during the Fort Chaffee closure; and correspondence with the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (SHPO), FEMA has concluded that there are no known tribal interests in or that will be affected by the proposed undertaking.

Act 753 of the Arkansas Burial Law (1991) prohibits the desecration of human remains and makes it illegal to purchase, sell, barter or otherwise profit from human remains.

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no impact to historic properties.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, FEMA has determined that the Proposed Action will have "no effect on historic properties." In the event that archeological deposits, including any Native American pottery, stone tools, bones, or human remains, are uncovered, the project shall be halted and the applicant shall stop all work immediately in the vicinity of the discovery and take all reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm

to the finds. All archeological findings will be secured by Sebastian County and access to the sensitive area will be restricted by Sebastian County. The applicant will inform ADEM and FEMA immediately, and FEMA will consult with the SHPO. Work in sensitive areas shall not resume until consultation is completed and until FEMA determines that the appropriate measures have been taken to ensure complete project compliance with the NHPA and its implementing regulations.

4.5 SOCIOECONOMIC RESOURCES

4.5.1 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 analyzed to determine if a disproportionate number of minority or low-income persons have the potential to be adversely affected by the proposed project.

The 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau (USCB) estimated the population of Fort Smith to be 83,750. At that time, approximately 14.7 percent of families in the city were estimated to be below the poverty level. Also, 22.9 percent of the population was estimated to belong to a minority group. The project area lies in Census Tract 13.02 of Sebastian County, Arkansas. As of the 2000 census, there were 6,278 people living in the tract. The median household income at the time was \$38,954. Roughly 7.2 percent of families were living below the poverty level, compared to the national average of 9.2 percent at the time. Within the tract, 14.6 percent of the population belonged to a minority group.

Under the No Action Alternative, there will be no disproportionate impact to any low-income or minority population, but residents in the project area and visitors to the park would remain vulnerable to tornado hazards.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, no adverse impacts on minority or low income populations are anticipated. The proposed safe room is expected to benefit all residents and businesses in the area by providing protection from severe weather.

4.5.2 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 sensitive receptors (e.g., noise-sensitive land uses) such as residences, schools, or hospitals.

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no impact to noise levels.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, there is a possibility for short-term impact to noise levels during construction. To reduce noise levels during that period, construction activities would take place during normal business hours. Equipment and machinery installed at the proposed project site would meet all local, state, and federal noise regulations.

4.5.3 Traffic

The proposed site is located within Ben Geren Regional Park. The site is accessible from Zero Street (AR 255) from the north.

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no impacts to traffic.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, temporary impacts to traffic may occur, due to the movement of construction vehicles and workers to and from the site. Zero Street is a five lane highway, and no closing of the road will be necessary, though slightly more traffic may be experienced in the area near the construction entrance to the park. There will be a reconstruction of the eastern side of Park Entrance Loop from the northern proposed driveway for the safe room to the point where the current road intersects Tennis Court Loop. This road will also serve as access for construction traffic to the site. Because of the layout of the park road system, traffic can be diverted from the eastern side of Park Entrance Loop to the west side of the same road, which also provides access to Zero Street for park patrons. Construction vehicles and equipment will be stored on-site during project construction and appropriate signage will be posted on affected roadways.

4.5.4 Public Service and Utilities

The proposed project site is currently being used strictly as an open park area. There are currently no utilities at the proposed project site. All utilities required by the proposed safe room are within approximately 500 feet of the site.

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no impact to public services or utilities.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, utilities will be extended and can provide better service to the park. No adverse impacts are anticipated.

4.5.5 Public Health and Safety

Safety and security issues considered in this EA include the health and safety of area residents, the public-at-large, and the protection of personnel involved in the activities related to the proposed construction of the project.

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (42 U.S.C. §6901 et seq. 1976) (RCRA) gives the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the authority to control hazardous waste from the "cradle-to-grave." This includes the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste. RCRA also set forth a framework for the management of non-hazardous solid wastes.

Under the No Action Alternative, the health and safety of nearby residents and employees will continue to be in danger when severe weather occurs in the area.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, short-term safety risks to construction workers and the general public would be present during construction activities. To minimize risks to safety and human health, all construction activities would be performed using qualified personnel trained in the proper use of the appropriate equipment, including all appropriate safety precautions. Additionally, all activities would be conducted in a safe manner in accordance with the standards specified in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations. The appropriate signage and barriers must be in place prior to construction activities to alert pedestrians and motorists of project activities. In accordance with RCRA, unusable equipment, debris and material shall be disposed of in an approved manner and location. In the event significant items (or evidence thereof) are discovered during implementation of the project, applicant shall handle, manage, and dispose of petroleum products, hazardous materials and toxic waste in accordance to the requirements and to the satisfaction of the governing local, state and federal agencies. Safety will be improved in the long run by providing a safe room for those in the area from severe weather. There would be no disproportionate health and safety risks to children in construction of the project.

4.6 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

According to 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.

The proposed project will construct a community safe room on land previously kept and used as open park land. No actions by others were identified as occurring or proposed in

the immediate vicinity of the proposed project site. However, the Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority (FCRA) is developing an area known as Chaffee Crossing. Chaffee Crossing is made up of approximately 7,000 acres of land acquired from Fort Chaffee, which was created in 1941 as an Army training base. It originally consisted of 72,000 acres. Chaffee Crossing is to the east and south of the proposed safe room project inside Ben Geren Regional Park. Currently, three residential subdivisions are being developed in the area near the park, those being The Woods, Cisterna Villa, and Reata. Cisterna Villa is the nearest subdivision, and is approximately half a mile from the proposed safe room site at its closest point and upstream along Vache Grass Creek. The majority of development in Cisterna and The Woods has been completed, with some lots still available. There is also an apartment complex just southeast of the Wal-Mart distribution center, which is the nearest to the proposed safe room. A map showing planned development is included in Appendix B.

Other development is expected to occur in the Chaffee Crossing area in the years to come, but the majority of it will be miles from the proposed safe room site. Future development will include more residential neighborhoods, along with commercial and industrial developments, such as a wind turbine assembly plant. The new Interstate 49 corridor runs through Chaffee Crossing, providing better access to and from the area. In addition, land has been set aside for a new public library, school, and River Valley Botanical Gardens. These, along with existing developments, the Janet Huckabee River Valley Nature Center and Deer Trails Golf Course, already within “The Crossing,” should greatly increase interest in the area.

Under the No Action Alternative, no negative cumulative impacts are expected to occur to the environment.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, no added adverse impacts are expected to occur to the environment due to previous or future development in the area. Any impacts associated with the safe room construction, previously discussed herein, would be minor in comparison to the development in Chaffee Crossing. The distance between future development and the proposed safe room is great enough that no expected impacts of the FCRA development should be compounded by the construction of the safe room. The safe room would be available for use to all the homeowners, businesses, and visitors to the Chaffee Crossing area, providing an even greater need for it as time passes.

Table 1: Impacts and Mitigation Summary

Affected Environment	Impacts	Mitigation
Geology and Soils	No impacts to geology, short-term impacts to soils during construction	BMP's such as installation of silt fencing and prompt revegetation of soils following completion of construction will be implemented in accordance with the SWPPP and NPDES permit that will be required under the Clean Water Act (See Section 4.2.1). Graded soil and waste materials will be managed in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.
Air Quality	Short-term impacts to air quality would be experienced during construction.	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.
Surface Water	Temporary short-term impacts to surface water are possible during construction activities.	Appropriate BMPs, such as installing silt fences and revegetating bare soils will be implemented in accordance with the SWPPP and NPDES permit.
Wetlands	No impacts to wetlands are anticipated	None

Affected Environment	Impacts	Mitigation
Floodplains	No impacts to the floodplain are anticipated.	The site, as proposed, is outside the floodplain, however, the eastern edge is very near to it. Extra care will be taken during construction to ensure the grading plan is strictly followed and the site is not in danger of flooding.
Threatened and Endangered Species and Critical Habitat	No federally listed endangered, threatened or candidate species or critical habitat are present in the project location. No effect to this resource.	None
Wildlife and Fish	No impact to any fish or wildlife is anticipated.	None
Cultural Resources	No impacts on cultural resources are anticipated during construction	In the event that archeological deposits, including any Native American pottery, stone tools, bones, or human remains, are uncovered, the project shall be halted and the applicant shall stop all work immediately in the vicinity of the discovery and take all reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm to the finds. All archeological findings will be secured by Sebastian County and access to the sensitive area will be restricted by Sebastian County. The applicant will inform ADEM and FEMA immediately and FEMA will consult with the SHPO. Work in sensitive areas shall not resume until consultation is completed and until FEMA determines that the appropriate measures have been taken to ensure the complete project is in compliance with the NHPA and its implementing regulations.
Environmental Justice	No adverse affects on low-income or minority populations are expected.	None

Affected Environment and Impacts

Affected Environment	Impacts	Mitigation
Noise	Short-term impacts to noise levels would occur at the proposed site during construction	Construction would take place during normal business hours and equipment would meet all local, State and federal noise regulations.
Traffic	Temporary short-term impacts on traffic in the area of the project site may occur during construction	Construction vehicles and equipment would be stored on site during project construction and appropriate signage would be posted on affected roadways.
Public Service and Utilities	Utilities will be extended to the proposed site for use by the facility. No adverse effects are anticipated for the current systems or users.	None
Public Health and Safety	There is potential for temporary minor impacts to safety of park visitors and construction personnel during construction activities. Safety would be improved in the long run by providing shelter for nearly 1000 people in case of severe weather.	<p>All construction activities would be performed using qualified personnel and in accordance with the standards specified in OSHA regulations; appropriate signage and barriers must be in place prior to construction activities to alert pedestrians and motorists of project activities.</p> <p>In accordance with RCRA, unusable equipment, debris and material shall be disposed of in an approved manner and location. In the event significant items (or evidence thereof) are discovered during implementation of the project, applicant shall handle, manage, and dispose of petroleum products, hazardous materials and toxic waste in accordance to the requirements and to the satisfaction of the governing local, state and federal agencies.</p>

SECTION FIVE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

FEMA is the lead federal agency for conducting the NEPA compliance process for proposed construction of a community safe room in the Town of Fort Smith, Sebastian County, Arkansas. 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.

The public was notified of Sebastian County's intent to move forward with the development of the safe room via a solicitation for comment on the County's website. Comments were accepted until June 15, 2010. No comments were received on the project in response.

A public notice advertising the availability of this Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for public review and comment will be made available in a local newspaper. The draft EA will be available at both a local repository and electronically upon request from FEMA. A 30-day public comment period will commence on the initial date of the public notice. FEMA will consider and respond to all public comments in the Final EA.

SECTION SIX

AGENCY COORDINATION AND PERMITS

As part of the development of the Environmental Assessment, federal and state resource protection agencies were contacted. Responses received to date are included in Appendix A.

- Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality, North Little Rock, AR
- Arkansas Historic Preservation Office, Little Rock, AR
- Arkansas Natural Resources Commission, Little Rock, AR
- Natural Resources Conservation Service, Little Rock, AR
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Little Rock, AR
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Conway, AR

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.

SECTION SEVEN

LIST OF PREPARERS

This document was prepared by Chris Gatling, E.I. along with assistance from Sasha Grist, of the Western Arkansas Planning and Development District, who provided correspondence from state and federal agencies and other project information.

This document was reviewed by Dorothy Weir, FEMA Region 6 Environmental Specialist, Kevin Jaynes, CHMM, FEMA Region 6 Regional Environmental Officer, and Laura Shick, Environmental Program Specialist, FEMA Office of Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation in order to ensure compliance with the NEPA process.

SECTION EIGHT REFERENCES

Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (ADEM). *Hazard Mitigation Grant Program*. 2010. <http://www.adem.arkansas.gov/ADEM/Divisions/Admin/Mitigation/hmgp.aspx>. Accessed October 29, 2010.

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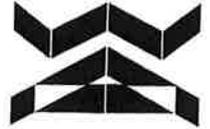
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United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soil Conservation Service (SCS). *Soil Survey of Sebastian County*. 1975.

United States Geological Survey (USGS). 1987. *Fort Smith, Arkansas, Barling 7.5-minute Quadrangle*. 1:24,000 series.

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<http://www.nps.gov/history/nagpra/documents/judicial.pdf>. Accessed March 7, 2011.

APPENDIX A
AGENCY COORDINATION



May 14, 2010

Ms. Frances McSwain
State Historic Preservation Office
1500 Tower Building; 323 Center
Little Rock, AR 72201

Subject: Request for information about proposed FEMA project; Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), at the Sebastian County Ben Geren Park, Fort Smith, Sebastian County, Arkansas.

Dear Ms. McSwain:

Sebastian County is applying to the Arkansas Emergency Management Administration (ADEM) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for a grant under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). HMGP grants provide funding for measures designed to reduce or eliminate future disaster damage and disaster relief expenditures. Sebastian County proposes to construct a safe room at the Ben Geren Park located at 7200 Zero Street in Fort Smith, Arkansas. The project area is marked on the enclosed map.

One of the requirements for the FEMA HMGP application is to identify the presence of any regulated resources in the project area. To avoid significant effects this project may have within the project area I am enclosing a map identifying the location of the project site as well as a topographic map delineating the area. I have also enclosed the flood map for this site, the project floor plan, and the site plan for your review. This project consists of the construction of safe room building that is approximately 6,225 gross square feet. No other building structures will be renovated, removed, demolished, or abandoned as a result of this project.

Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact me by phone (479) 785-2651, by fax (479) 785-1964, by email (sgrist@wapdd.org), or by letter at P.O. Box 2067, Fort Smith, AR 72902.

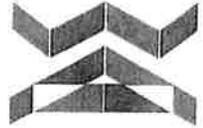
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sasha Grist".

Sasha Grist
Director of Community Development

Enclosures

Western Arkansas Planning & Development District Inc.



RECEIVED
MAY 21 2010
BY:

72537
FEMA

May 14, 2010

Ms. Frances McSwain
State Historic Preservation Office
1500 Tower Building; 323 Center
Little Rock, AR 72201

Subject: Request for information about proposed FEMA project; Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), at the Sebastian County Ben Geren Park, Fort Smith, Sebastian County, Arkansas.

AHPP
MAY 19 2010

Dear Ms. McSwain:

Sebastian County is applying to the Arkansas Emergency Management Administration (ADEM) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for a grant under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). HMGP grants provide funding for measures designed to reduce or eliminate future disaster damage and disaster relief expenditures. Sebastian County proposes to construct a safe room at the Ben Geren Park located at 7200 Zero Street in Fort Smith, Arkansas. The project area is marked on the enclosed map.

One of the requirements for the FEMA HMGP application is to identify the presence of any regulated resources in the project area. To avoid significant effects this project may have within the project area I am enclosing a map identifying the location of the project site as well as a topographic map delineating the area. I have also enclosed the flood map for this site, the project floor plan, and the site plan for your review. This project consists of the construction of safe room building that is approximately 6,225 gross square feet. No other building structures will be renovated, removed, demolished, or abandoned as a result of this project.

Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact me by phone (479) 785-2651, by fax (479) 785-1964, by email (sgrist@wapdd.org), or by letter at P.O. Box 2067, Fort Smith, AR 72902.

Sincerely,

Sasha Grist
Director of Community Development

Enclosures

Date 05/20/10
No known historic properties will be affected by this undertaking. This effect determination could change should new information come to light.
Frances McSwain
Frances McSwain, Deputy State
Historic Preservation Officer



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
110 S. Amity Road, Suite 300
Conway, Arkansas 72032
Tel.: 501/513-4470 Fax: 501/513-4480



December 2, 2010

Reference: TA0268
Chris D. Gatling
Mickle Wagner Coleman
P.O. Box 1507
Fort Smith, Arkansas 72902

Dear Mr. Gatling:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has reviewed the information supplied in your letter dated October 29, 2010, concerning the proposed Ben Geren Regional Park safe room in Fort Smith, Sebastian County, Arkansas. Our comments are submitted in accordance with the Endangered Species Act (87 Stat. 884, as amended 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.)

The endangered American burying beetle (*Nicrophorus americanus*) (ABB) occurs in Sebastian County.

Numerous factors including project type, construction/installation duration, permanency, location, land use, implementation methods, habitat, and time/season may directly or indirectly affect the ABB. Projects with ground disturbing activities less than the minimum acreage threshold of three acres have less than a one percent chance of encountering an ABB and therefore no survey and/or trap and relocation is required for these projects.

The comments herein are for the sole purpose of providing technical assistance to the action agency or for individual pre-project planning assistance. These comments and opinions should not be misconstrued as an "effect determination" or considered as concurrence with any proceeding determination(s) by the action agency in accordance with Section 7 of the ESA. These comments do not authorize the "take" of a threatened or endangered species as defined under the ESA. In the absence of authorization (e.g., an ESA Section 10 Permit, a Biological Opinion with "incidental take" provisions, a finding concurrence letter, etc.) from the Service, both lethal and nonlethal "take" of protected species are in violation of the ESA.

We appreciate your interest in the preservation of endangered species. If you have any questions, please contact Erin Leone at (501) 513-4472 or Brittany Gates at (501) 513-4487.

Sincerely,

for Margaret Harney
Environmental Coordinator

RECEIVED DEC 07 2010

Western Arkansas Planning & Development District Inc.



RECEIVED
JUN 17 2010
BY:

May 14, 2010

RECEIVED
MAY 18 RECD
ARK FIELD OFFICE

Margaret Harney, Environmental Coordinator
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Arkansas Field Office
110 South Amity, Suite 300
Conway, AR 72032

Subject: Request for information about proposed FEMA project; Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), at the Sebastian County Ben Geren Park, Fort Smith, Sebastian County, Arkansas.

Dear Ms. Harney:

Sebastian County is applying to the Arkansas Emergency Management Administration (ADEM) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for a grant under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). HMGP grants provide funding for measures designed to reduce or eliminate future disaster damage and disaster relief expenditures. Sebastian County proposes to construct a safe room at the Ben Geren Park located at 7200 Zero Street in Fort Smith, Arkansas. The project area is marked on the enclosed map.

One of the requirements for the FEMA HMGP application is to identify the presence of any regulated resources in the project area. To avoid significant effects this project may have within the project area I am enclosing a map identifying the location of the project site as well as a topographic map delineating the area. I have also enclosed the flood map for this site, the project floor plan, and the site plan for your review. This project consists of the construction of safe room building that is approximately 6,225 gross square feet. No other building structures will be renovated, removed, demolished, or abandoned as a result of this project.

Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact me by phone (479) 785-2651, by fax (479) 785-1964, by email (sgrist@wapdd.org), or by letter at P.O. Box 2067, Fort Smith, AR 72902.

Sincerely,

Sasha Grist
Director of Community Development

Enclosure

Environmental Coordinator
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

43421-2010-TA066T

June 15, 2010

Date

No federally listed endangered,
threatened or candidate species present



May 14, 2010

Department of the Army
Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 867
Little Rock, AR 72203-0867

Subject: Request for information about proposed FEMA project; Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), at the Sebastian County Ben Geren Park, Fort Smith, Sebastian County, Arkansas.

To Whom It May Concern:

Sebastian County is applying to the Arkansas Emergency Management Administration (ADEM) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for a grant under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). HMGP grants provide funding for measures designed to reduce or eliminate future disaster damage and disaster relief expenditures. Sebastian County proposes to construct a safe room at the Ben Geren Park located at 7200 Zero Street in Fort Smith, Arkansas. The project area is marked on the enclosed map.

One of the requirements for the FEMA HMGP application is to identify the presence of any regulated resources in the project area. To avoid significant effects this project may have within the project area I am enclosing a map identifying the location of the project site as well as a topographic map delineating the area. I have also enclosed the flood map for this site, the project floor plan, and the site plan for your review. This project consists of the construction of safe room building that is approximately 6,225 gross square feet. No other building structures will be renovated, removed, demolished, or abandoned as a result of this project.

Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact me by phone (479) 785-2651, by fax (479) 785-1964, by email (sgrist@wapdd.org), or by letter at P.O. Box 2067, Fort Smith, AR 72902.

Sincerely,

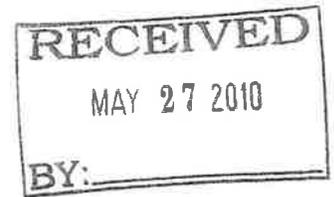
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sasha Grist".

Sasha Grist
Director of Community Development

Enclosure



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
LITTLE ROCK DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
POST OFFICE BOX 867
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72203-0867



May 25, 2010

Planning and Environmental Division

Sasha Grist
Director of Community Development
Western Arkansas Planning
& Development District, Inc.
P.O. Box 2067
Fort Smith, AR 72902

Dear Ms. Grist:

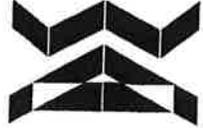
The Little Rock District Corps of Engineers, Planning and Environmental Division has reviewed the information you provided for the **Proposed "Safe Room" Construction at Ben Geren Park in Fort Smith, Sebastian County, Arkansas**. There should be no impacts to any floodplains or wetlands; therefore we have no concerns or objections to this project.

Thank you for allowing us to review this proposed project. If you have any questions, please call me at 501-324-5629.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jim Ellis".

Jim Ellis
NEPA Specialist



May 14, 2010

Michael J. Borengasser, CFM
Floodplain Management
Arkansas Natural Resources Commission
101 East Capitol, Suite 350
Little Rock, AR 72201

Subject: Request for information about proposed FEMA project; Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), at the Sebastian County Ben Geren Park, Fort Smith, Sebastian County, Arkansas.

Dear Mr. Borengasser:

Sebastian County is applying to the Arkansas Emergency Management Administration (ADEM) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for a grant under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). HMGP grants provide funding for measures designed to reduce or eliminate future disaster damage and disaster relief expenditures. Sebastian County proposes to construct a safe room at the Ben Geren Park located at 7200 Zero Street in Fort Smith, Arkansas. The project area is marked on the enclosed map.

One of the requirements for the FEMA HMGP application is to identify the presence of any regulated resources in the project area. To avoid significant effects this project may have within the project area I am enclosing a map identifying the location of the project site as well as a topographic map delineating the area. I have also enclosed the flood map for this site, the project floor plan, and the site plan for your review. This project consists of the construction of safe room building that is approximately 6,225 gross square feet. No other building structures will be renovated, removed, demolished, or abandoned as a result of this project.

Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact me by phone (479) 785-2651, by fax (479) 785-1964, by email (sgrist@wapdd.org), or by letter at P.O. Box 2067, Fort Smith, AR 72902.

Sincerely,

Sasha Grist
Director of Community Development

Enclosures

Sasha Grist

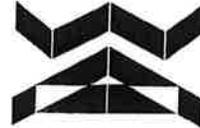
From: Michael Borengasser [michael.borengasser@arkansas.gov]
Sent: Monday, May 24, 2010 8:40 AM
To: Sasha Grist
Subject: Proposed Safe Room at Ben Geren Park, 7200 Zero Street

Sasha,

This site is located outside the Special Flood Hazard Area. However, since the back of the building appears to be only 100 or so feet from the SFHA and the SFHA is an Approximate Zone A, extra precautions should be taken to ensure the site is reasonably safe from flooding.

Mike

Michael J. Borengasser, CFM
NFIP Coordinator
Arkansas Natural Resources Commission
101 E. Capitol, Suite 350
Little Rock, AR 72201
Phone: 501-682-3969 FAX: 501-682-3991
michael.borengasser@arkansas.gov



May 14, 2010

Mr. Scott Waller
Department of Environmental Quality
5301 North Shore Drive
North Little Rock, AR 72118-5317

Subject: Request for information about proposed FEMA project; Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), at the Sebastian County Ben Geren Park, Fort Smith, Sebastian County, Arkansas.

Dear Mr. Waller:

Sebastian County is applying to the Arkansas Emergency Management Administration (ADEM) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for a grant under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). HMGP grants provide funding for measures designed to reduce or eliminate future disaster damage and disaster relief expenditures. Sebastian County proposes to construct a safe room at the Ben Geren Park located at 7200 Zero Street in Fort Smith, Arkansas. The project area is marked on the enclosed map.

One of the requirements for the FEMA HMGP application is to identify the presence of any regulated resources in the project area. To avoid significant effects this project may have within the project area I am enclosing a map identifying the location of the project site as well as a topographic map delineating the area. I have also enclosed the flood map for this site, the project floor plan, and the site plan for your review. This project consists of the construction of safe room building that is approximately 6,225 gross square feet. No other building structures will be renovated, removed, demolished, or abandoned as a result of this project.

Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact me by phone (479) 785-2651, by fax (479) 785-1964, by email (sgrist@wapdd.org), or by letter at P.O. Box 2067, Fort Smith, AR 72902.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sasha Grist". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Sasha Grist
Director of Community Development

Enclosures

ADEQ

ARKANSAS
Department of Environmental Quality



May 21, 2010

Sasha Grist
Director of Community Development
1109 South 16th Street
P.O. Box 2067
Fort Smith, Arkansas 72902

Re: Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Safe Room Construction, Sebastian County
Ben Geren Park

Dear Miss Grist:

This is in reference to your 5/14/2010 submittal regarding a certificate of adequacy for the Sebastian County – Ben Geren Park Safe Room Construction at 7200 Zero Street in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Based upon the information submitted, it appears that the proposed project is environmentally sound and in compliance with State and Federal laws.

Additionally, if the construction site will disturb in excess of one (1) acre, the permittee must comply with the terms of the Stormwater Construction General Permit ARR150000 prior to the start of construction.

This letter is issued in reliance upon the statements and representations made in the submittal and the Department has no responsibility for adequacy or proper functioning of the proposed safe room.

If there are further questions, please contact me at (501) 682-0616.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Mo Shafii".

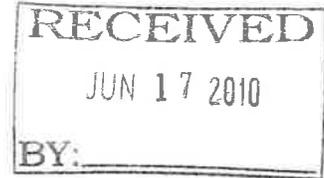
Mo Shafii
Assistant Chief, Water Division

MS:sw

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service
Room 3416, Federal Building
700 West Capitol Avenue
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201-3225



JUN 15 2010

Sasha Grist
Director of Community Development
Western Arkansas Planning & Development District, Inc.
P.O. Box 2067
Fort Smith, Arkansas 72902

Dear Ms. Grist:

This letter is in response to your request for information related to Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance for the proposed construction of a Safe Room at Ben Geren Park located at 7200 Zero Street in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Since the area has been designated as a park by the City of Fort Smith, it does not meet the criteria for Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please call me at (501) 301-3172 or email at edgar.mersiovsky@ar.usda.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edgar Mersiovsky".

EDGAR P. MERSIOVSKY
Assistant State Soil Scientist

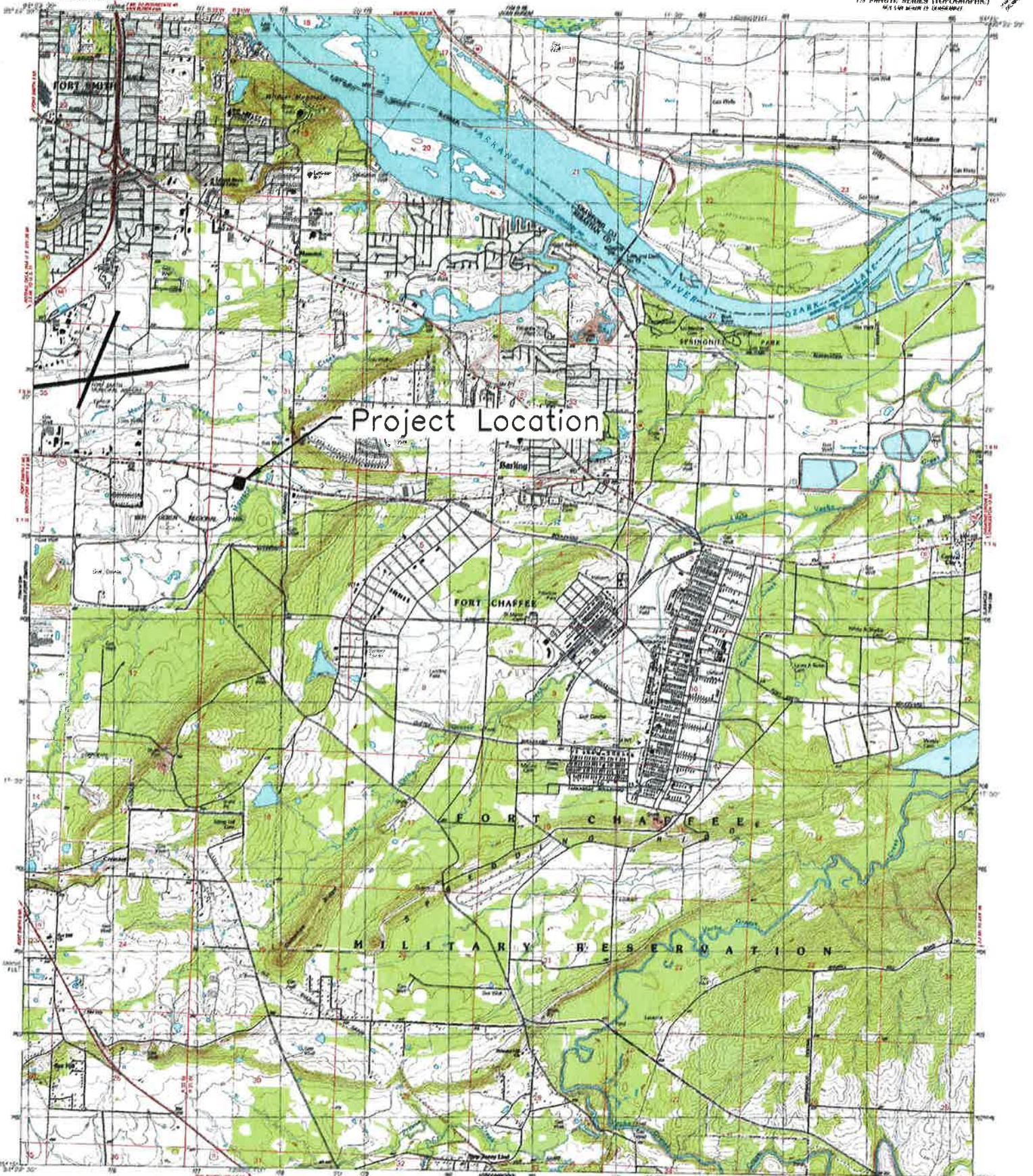
Enclosure

cc:

Luis Hernandez, Soil Survey Region 16 Leader/State Soil Scientist, NRCS, Little Rock, AR

APPENDIX B

EXHIBITS



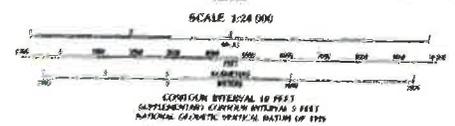
Project Location

FORT CHAPARRAL

FORT CHAPARRAL

MILITARY RESERVATION

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
Control by USGS and WAC/NGA
Triangulation by photogrammetry, methods from aerial photography taken 1962. Field checked 1966. Map edited 1967
Supersedes Army Map Service map dated 1947
Projection and 15,000 foot grid ticks: Arkansas coordinate system, north zone (Lambert conformal conic)
1983 metric Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15
1927 North American Datum
To place on the published North American Datum 1983, note the projection ticks in meters, and note the 18 meter error in meters by double conversion factor
There may be ground subsidence within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map
Clear line indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway	Light duty road, hard or unpaved surface
Hard surface	
Secondary highway	Unimproved road
Hard surface	
Interstate	U.S. Route
	State Route

BARLING, ARK.
M. & L. MAP WITH 15' QUADRANGLE
2999423-75-024
1987
DMA 2554 BY 82-SERIES 1988

THIS MAP COMPLETES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80226 OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND ARKANSAS GEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72204
A POLAR PROJECTION TOPOGRAPHIC MAP AND SYSTEMS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



zero_storm_shelters_city_tpop.dwg

VICINITY MAP

SEBASTIAN COUNTY
STORM SHELTER LOCATION
 FORT SMITH, SEBASTIAN COUNTY, ARKANSAS

**MICKLE
 WAGNER
 COLEMAN**

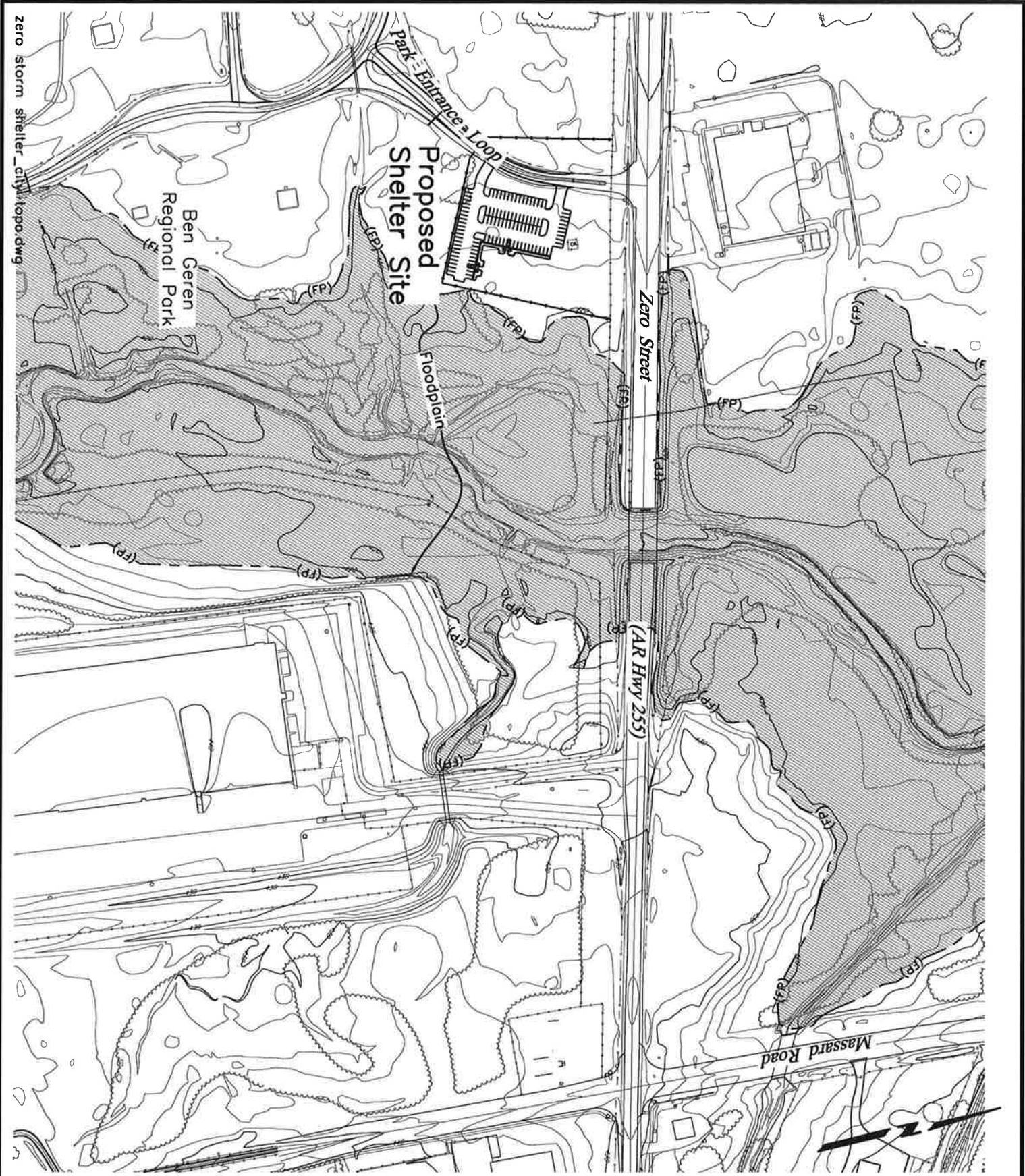


Engineers-Consultants-Surveyors

3434 Country Club Ave.
 P.O. Box 1507
 Fort Smith, Arkansas

(479) 649-8484
 Fax: (479) 649-8486
 info@mwc-engr.com

DATE:	NOVEMBER 2010
V. SCALE:	N/A
H. SCALE:	1"=200'
DRWN. BY:	C. COLLINS
CHECKED BY:	J. HOLLER
JOB NO.:	
SHEET 1 OF 1	



zero storm shelter_city.kopo.dwg

VICINITY MAP

SEBASTIAN COUNTY
STORM SHELTER LOCATION
 FORT SMITH, SEBASTIAN COUNTY, ARKANSAS

DESIGNED BY:	J. WICKER
DRAWN BY:	C. COLLINS
SCALE:	1"=50'
DATE:	NOVEMBER 2010
JOB NO.:	
SHEET	1 OF 1

MICKLE WAGNER COLEMAN  **Engineers-Consultants-Surveyors**
 3434 Country Club Ave. (479) 649-8484
 P.O. Box 1507 Fort Smith, Arkansas Fax: (479) 649-8486
 Info@mw-c-engr.com

SOUTH ZERO STREET

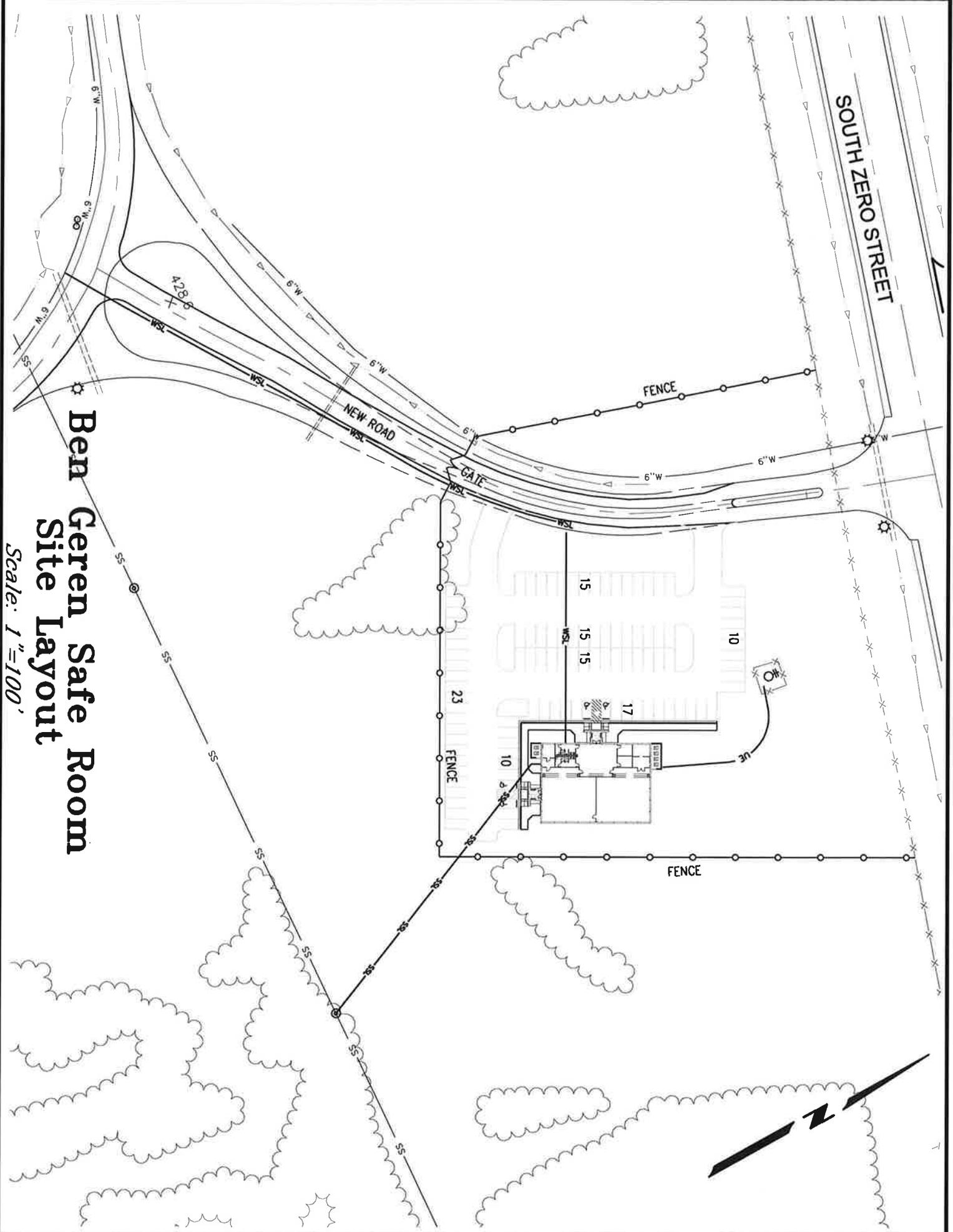
FENCE

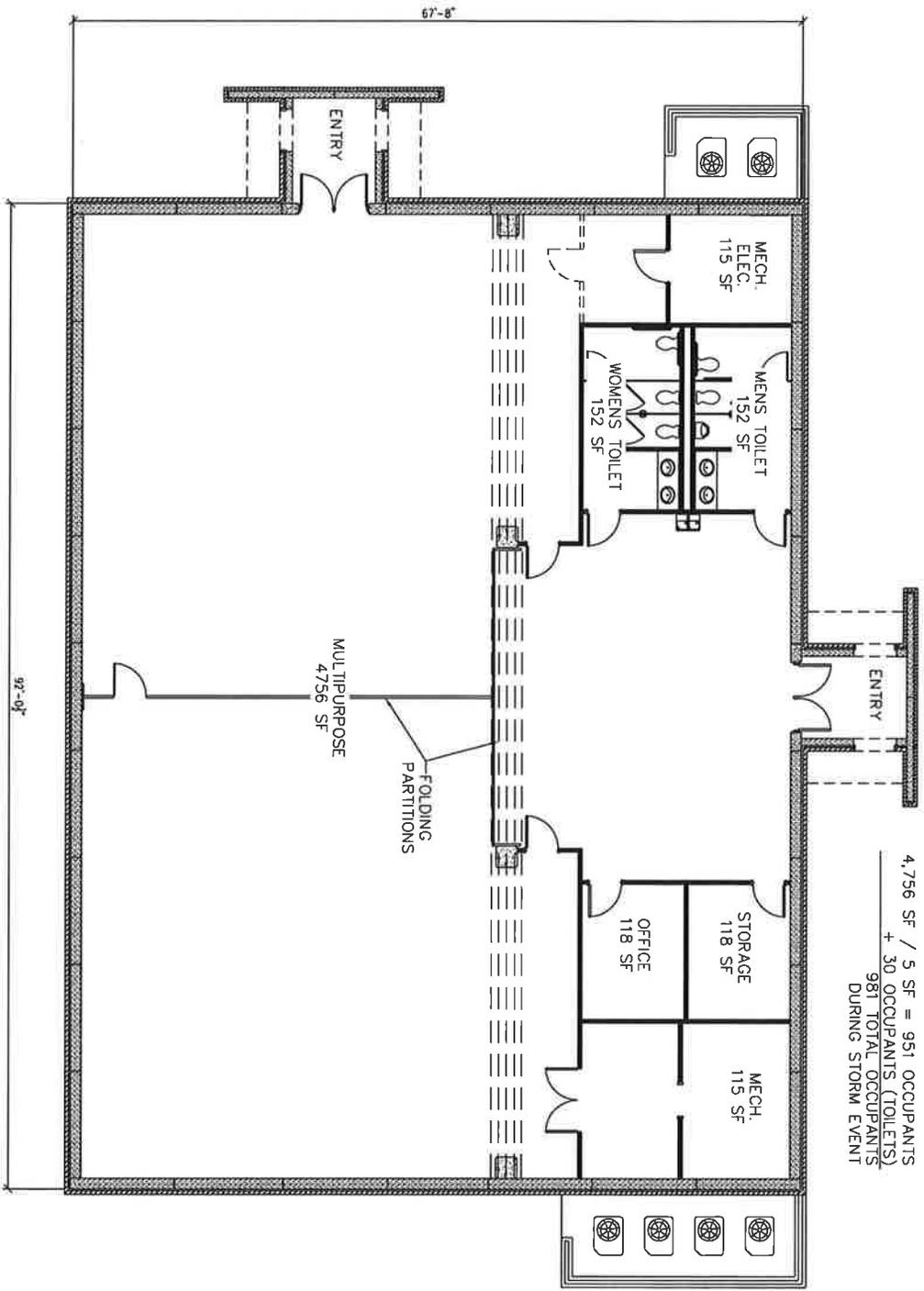
GATE

NEW ROAD

Ben Geren Safe Room Site Layout

Scale: 1"=100'





4,756 SF / 5 SF = 951 OCCUPANTS
 + 30 OCCUPANTS (TOILETS)
 981 TOTAL OCCUPANTS
 DURING STORM EVENT

PRELIMINARY FLOOR PLAN
 1/16"=1'-0"

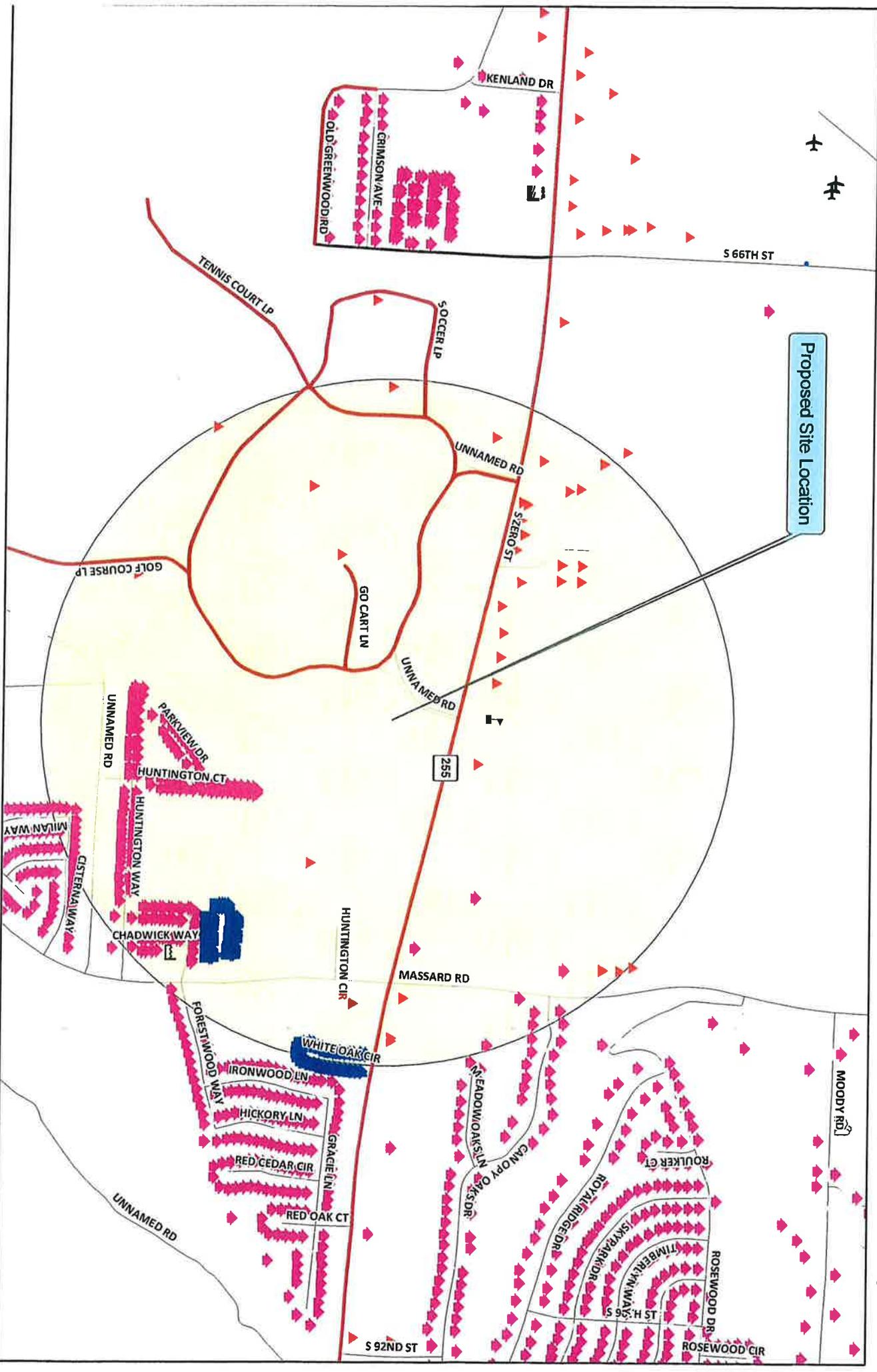


Ben Geren Safe Room

S Zero St / Hwy 255
Fort Smith, AR

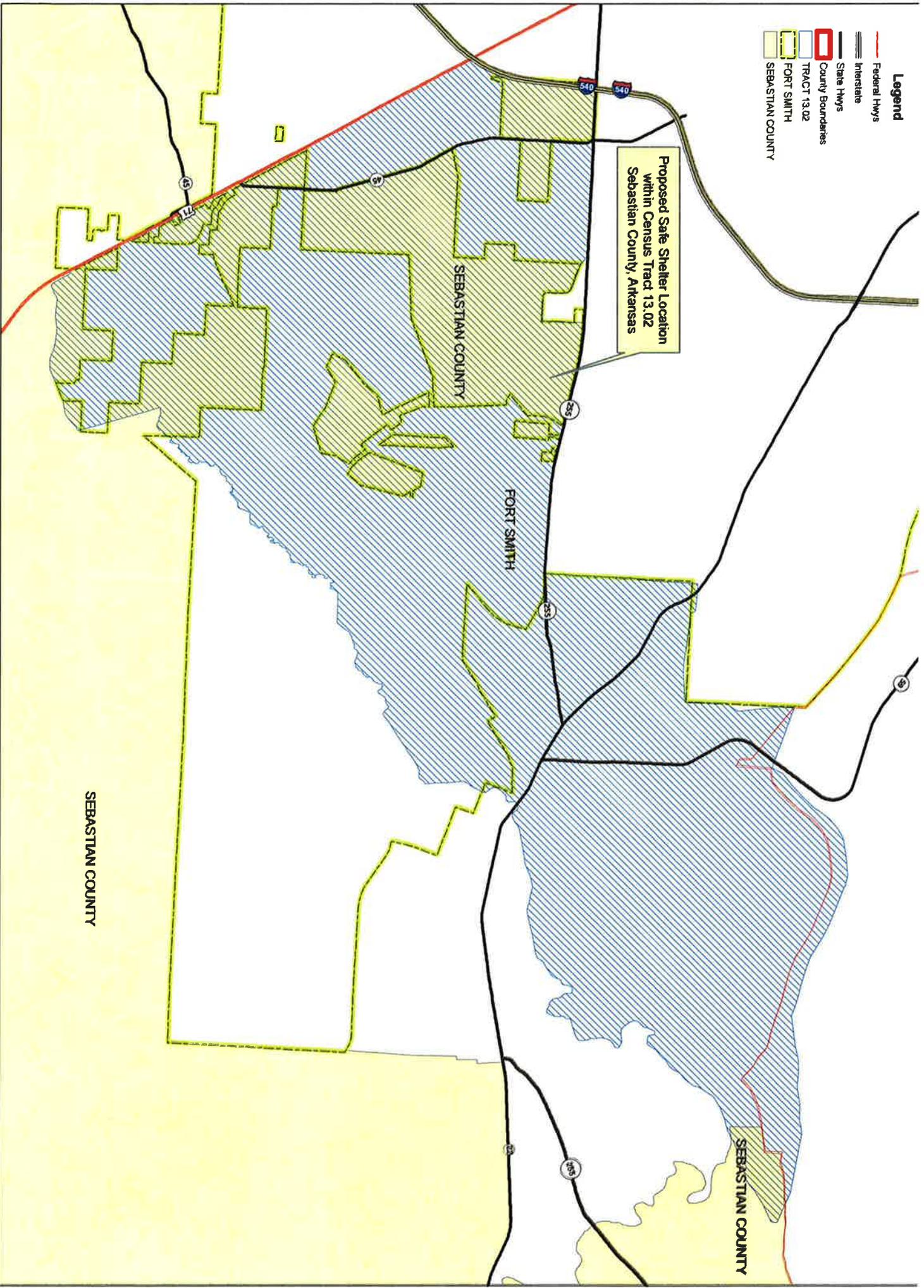
257 Total Residential Structures for 1/2 mile radius
186 Single Family & 71 Multi-Family

1:12,000
1 inch = 1,000 feet



- Legend**
- Federal Hwys
 - Interstate
 - State Hwys
 - County Boundaries
 - TRACT 13.02
 - FORT SMITH
 - SEBASTIAN COUNTY

Proposed Safe Shelter Location
within Census Tract 13.02
Sebastian County, Arkansas



BEN GEREN REGIONAL PARK PROPOSED SAFE SHELTER LOCATION

SEBASTIAN COUNTY ARKANSAS

Western Arkansas Planning & Develop District

1108 S 16th St • PO Box 2067 • Fort Smith, AR 72902 • (479) 785-2651



