

Draft Environmental Assessment  
**Responder Support Camp**  
Minot, Ward County, North Dakota  
FEMA-1981-DR-ND

*July 15, 2011*



**FEMA**

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## **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

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AMSL	Above Mean Sea Level
BMP	Best Management Practices
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DEA	Draft Environmental Assessment
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
EA	Environmental Assessment
EDR	Environmental Data Resources, Inc.
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FINDS	Facility Index System
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
GIS	Geographic Information System
LUST	Leaking Underground Storage Tank
MDC	Missouri Department of Conservation
MDNR	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NWI	National Wetland Inventory
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SQG	Small-Quantity Generator
SWHS	State Hazardous Waste Site
TCP	Traditional Cultural Properties
UFAS	Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards
USFS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey

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This Environmental Assessment (EA) documents the results of a study of the proposed action's potential environmental impacts and has been prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969; the President's Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA (Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations [CFR], Part 1500-1508 [49 CFR 1500-1508]); and the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regulations implementing NEPA (44 CFR 10.9).

**Background:**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the United State Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) are working with partners at the local and state levels and with other Federal agencies to coordinate the response to the devastating flooding that struck Minot, Ward County, North Dakota. The flooding of the Souris/Mouse River has flooded 800 to 1000 trailer homes and over 4000 permanent houses in Minot.

President Obama declared a major disaster for North Dakota due to damages from severe flooding, and signed a disaster declaration (FEMA-1981-DR-ND) on May 10, 2011, with amendments on June 2, June 7, June 23, June 24 and June 29 authorizing FEMA to provide federal assistance in designated areas of North Dakota. Of specific concern addressed by this EA is that the displaced individuals and families, as well as local first responders are currently sheltering in all available housing and lodging facilities space. To compound the housing shortage, the petroleum industry boom of north central and northwest North Dakota has already saturated the housing market within a 150 mile radius of Minot with workers. Therefore, there is a need to expedite the selection and development process for a Responder Support Camp to house necessary FEMA, USACE and EPA personnel and minimize the time required to travel from temporary available housing in other counties to Minot.

FEMA proposes to administer federal disaster assistance funds per the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 USC 5121-5206, as amended (Stafford Act).

**Purpose and Need**

The project purpose is to provide shelter for responders, accessible to the Minot, Ward County area. The need is a direct result of no available shelter for responders within a 150 mile radius of the Minot, Ward County area.

**Project Alternatives:**

NEPA requires the investigation and evaluation of reasonable project alternatives as part of the project environmental review process. Two alternatives are addressed in this Draft Environmental Assessment: the No Action Alternative, where FEMA would not build a support camp, and the Proposed Action, where FEMA would build a Responder Support Camp in Minot, Ward County, North Dakota.

**Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative**

Under the No Action Alternative, FEMA would not fund the Proposed Action. As a result of both the petroleum industry boom as well as the damage/destruction of more than 5000 homes due to flooding in the vicinity of Minot, North Dakota, lodging within a 150 mile radius of Minot is severely limited. This would result in a reduction of service time to disaster victims as FEMA, FEMA contractors and other responders would be required to spend excessive time in long commutes to the disaster area.

**Alternative 2 – Responder Support Camp (Proposed Action)**

In considering the “range of reasonable alternatives,” efforts were made to utilize sites identified by the USACE as potential locations for temporary housing. However, it was determined that the number one priority is to meet the temporary housing need of the disaster victims. Therefore, only the Minot site was available as a viable site for the camp.

**Project Location:**

The proposed site is located on the west side of 42<sup>nd</sup> Street NE, .4 miles north of intersection with 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. This is in Township 155N; Range 82W; Section 17, SE ¼. The latitude and longitude for the four corners of the site are:

Northwest corner: N48.24662; 101.234977W

Northeast corner: N48.246633; 101.231362W

Southwest corner: N48.245290; 101.234848W

Southeast corner: N48.245304; 101.231308

**Site Description:**

The site consists of approximately 10 acres of land owned by the City of Minot. The site is bordered on the east by 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, and by agricultural land on the other three sides. The terrain is essentially flat with change in elevation from 1617' to 1620' WGS-84. The site is disturbed ground with no cover and was previously used as a pipe staging area for the City of Minot. The City of Minot has provided FEMA with a Memorandum of Understanding for the use of the land. (See Appendix D)

**Project Description:**

This proposed alternative would involve providing base camp support services inclusive of mobilization, site preparation, installation, base camp management and operation, and demobilization as set forth herein and in task orders. Contractor shall have the ability to provide two concurrent base camps. Contractor services include:

- Base camp design;
- Site preparation;
- Installation and maintenance of all contractor provided equipment; and
- All services necessary to effectively and efficiently manage and operate the base camp.

The contractor shall house all authorized camp occupants with tents or modular units, equip tents and other facilities with air conditioning and heating (HVAC) and leveled plywood floors (or equivalent) as well as provide bedding, meal services, kitchen, dining hall, limited recreation facilities, operations center, medical unit, refrigerated trucks, shower units, hand wash units, potable (drinking) water, water purification and manifold distribution systems, toilets, on-site manifold distribution of black and grey water and associated on-site sanitation systems, complete laundry service, industrial generators, and light towers.

The site is currently hard-packed dirt that will require some re-surfacing to prevent mud issues during rain/snow events. A safety fence will also be installed and maintained around the camp perimeter.

**Site Selection Process:**

NEPA requires investigation and evaluation of reasonable project alternatives as part of the project environmental review process. In order to expedite the site selection process, FEMA and USACE staff reviewed available aerial photos and maps, conducted site reconnaissance field surveys, and contacted state and local officials to identify potential sites. Factors considered in choosing a site include: site topography, property owner willingness, past land use, if it was already planned for development, access to existing utilities, and engineering feasibility.

## **Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences**

In order to meet the proposed purpose and need of timely development of temporary housing for FEMA disaster responders, FEMA conducted an expedited environmental review process to identify environmental issues that need addressing. The environmental review process included a field reconnaissance visit of the proposed project site, as well as background research. The field reconnaissance visit was conducted on July 11, 2011. Background research consisted of a review of wetlands maps, FEMA floodplain maps, and obtaining the environmental consultations conducted for this site in February, 2011 for a CDBG funded project for the Souris Basin Planning Council.

The following matrix summarizes the results of the environmental review process (Table 1). Potential environmental impacts that were found to be negligible are not evaluated further. Resource areas that have the potential for impacts of minor, moderate, or major intensity are further developed in the following Section J. Definitions of the impact intensity are described below:

**Negligible:** The resource area (e.g., geology) would not be affected, or changes would be either non-detectable or if detected, would have effects that would be slight and local. Impacts would be well below regulatory standards, as applicable.

**Minor:** Changes to the resource would be measurable, although the changes would be small and localized. Impacts would be within or below regulatory standards, as applicable. Mitigation measures would reduce any potential adverse effects.

**Moderate:** Changes to the resource would be measurable and have both localized and regional scale impacts. Impacts would be within or below regulatory standards, but historical conditions are being altered on a short-term basis. Mitigation measures would be necessary and the measures would reduce any potential adverse effects.

**Major:** Changes would be readily measurable and would have substantial consequences on a local and regional level. Impacts would exceed regulatory standards. Mitigation measures to offset the adverse effects would be required to reduce impacts, though long-term changes to the resource would be expected.

Table 1. Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences Matrix

Resource Area	Impact Intensity				Mitigation	Agency Coordination / Permits	Comments
	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major			
Geology and Soils	X				Implementation of construction BMPs will reduce any sedimentation.		
Hydrology and Floodplains (Executive Order 11988)	X						Flood Insurance Rate Maps were reviewed on FEMA's website. The site is located on FIRM 38101C 0801D in unshaded Zone X (outside the 100-year floodplain).
Wetlands (Executive Order 11990)	X						Site has been previously disturbed. No wetlands on or immediately adjacent to the site.
Water Quality		X			NPDES Permit or waiver from ND Dept of Health re: stormwater control.		Contractor will provide all utilities, including water and sewer. Drainage system will be required to meet all local and county requirements See Section J.
Air Quality	X						Minimal change to existing air quality during construction.
Vegetation and Wildlife	X						Site is packed dirt.
Threatened and Endangered Species (Endangered Species Act Section 7)	X					USFWS determination of no effect. (02-17-2011).	
Cultural Resources (National Historic Preservation Act Section 106)	X				If unanticipated historic or cultural materials are discovered during construction, construction activities shall immediately cease within 100 feet of the materials until their cultural affiliation and ultimate disposition are determined in consultation with FEMA's Environmental Liaison Officer and the North Dakota SHPO. Gravel must be obtained from an approved source.	SHPO determination of no effect. (02-16-2011).	
Socioeconomics	X						
Environmental Justice (Executive Order 12898)	X						See Section J.
Noise	X						See Section J.

Safety and Security		X			Fencing would be placed around the perimeter of the site to assist in providing site security. Contractor to provide 24-hour security services.		Contractor will coordinate with FEMA Safety Officer. See Section J.
Hazardous Materials and Toxic Wastes	X						EPA Hazardous Materials database search queried on July 13, 2011. No sites of concern were identified by the database search. No environmental conditions of concern observed during field reconnaissance.
Traffic and Transportation		X					See Section J.

## **Additional Impact Analysis**

### Water Quality

There are no streams located on or immediately adjacent to the subject property. The property is relatively flat, so there is no clear channel that would carry rainwater off the property. A General National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit, or a waiver of the permit, must be obtained from the North Dakota Department of Health prior to the start of any work on the site.

### Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898, Environmental Justice, requires each federal agency to identify and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income households in the United States. The Proposed Alternative will have no disproportionately high or adverse impacts on minority or low-income populations.

### Noise

Noise is defined as “sound undesirable because it is intense and/or loud enough to damage hearing, interferes with speech communication and sleep, or is annoying. Sound varies simultaneously in level (or loudness) and frequency content (pitch), as well as in time of occurrence and duration. The fundamental measure of sound level is expressed in unit of decibels (dB) using a logarithmic scale.

Potential noise impacts associated with both construction and the temporary housing will have little to no effect on the area which is rural with no residential areas within several miles.

### Safety and Security

The contractor will identify and rectify any potential safety hazards associated with the construction process. Included in the Task Order Service Requirements is a Medical Unit, which will be manned throughout the occupation of the camp. In addition, the contractor will coordinate with the FEMA safety officer to insure a safe environment.

Chain link fencing will be placed around the perimeter of the housing site (not the parking area), with 24-hour guards for security of personnel.

### Traffic and Transportation

During the consultation process by the Souris Basin Planning Council for the expansion of the Minot Value Added Agricultural Park, ND Department of Transportation stated in a letter dated February 8, 2011 that that project (the proposed site for the RSC) “should have no adverse effect on the NDDOT highways; however there are two upcoming projects in 2011 and 2012...[so] NDDOT asks that contact [be maintained] with the District Engineer.”

### **Public Involvement**

A Public Notice was published in the Minot Daily News on July 15, and the Bismarck Tribune on July 16, newspapers of record for the state of North Dakota.

Due to the emergency nature of this action, the public comment period will be completed by close of business on July 18. Written comments on the Draft EA can be faxed to FEMA's Joint Field Office in Bismarck at 701-258-4516; and verbal comments will be accepted at (701) 221-8697 and TTY for hearing or speech-impaired at 1-800-462-7585; between 8:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. The Draft EA can be viewed and downloaded from FEMA's website at <http://www.fema.gov/ehp/docs.shtm> . If you use 711-Relay or Video Relay Service (VRS) call 1-701-221-5105. If no substantive comments are received, the Draft EA will become final and this initial Public Notice will also serve as the final Public Notice.

### **Conclusion**

Due to the extreme time constraints for resolving the housing shortage, and based on the determinations FEMA has made from the information as noted in this EA, the Proposed Action alternative does not have the potential for significant cumulative effects when combined with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, in accordance with 44 CFR Part 10.8 (d)(3)(x), and has therefore been chosen as the Preferred Alternative.

**Appendix A - Finding of No Significant Impact**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
RESPONDER SUPPORT CAMP  
MINOT, WARD COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA  
FEMA-1981-DR-ND**

As a result of damages from severe flooding, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was authorized under a Presidential disaster declaration (FEMA-1981-DR-ND) to provide Federal assistance per the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, to designated disaster areas in North Dakota. There are insufficient rental units available to house displaced disaster victims, and none for the FEMA, USACE and other responders. In response to this need, FEMA is proposing to build a Responder Support Camp in the vicinity of Minot, Ward County North Dakota.

In order to implement all the various FEMA programs in a timely and effective manner, FEMA utilized an expedited process to assess the potential environmental impacts of building temporary housing for its responders. An Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the President's Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEP A (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and FEMA regulations for NEP A compliance (44 CFR Part 10). The EA's purpose is to analyze and document the preferred alternative's potential environmental impacts, serve as a vehicle to document compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The EA is hereby incorporated by reference.

The RSC temporary camp site is located on the west side of 42<sup>nd</sup> Street NE, .4 miles north of the intersection with 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. The proposed camp site consists of approximately 10 acres owned by the City of Minot. The contractor will provide all authorized camp occupants with tents or modular units, equip tents and other facilities with air conditioning and heating (HVAC) and leveled plywood floors (or equivalent) as well as provide bedding, meal services, kitchen, dining hall, limited recreation facilities, operations center, medical unit, refrigerated trucks, shower units, hand wash units, potable (drinking) water, water purification and manifold distribution systems, toilets, on-site manifold distribution of black and grey water and associated on-site sanitation systems, complete laundry service, industrial generators, and light towers.

Access to the site will be from the existing drive off of 42<sup>nd</sup> Street NE with the contractor maintaining contact with NDDOT District Engineer for the duration of use of the site by FEMA. Site preparation will require minimal grading with some re-surfacing of the site

to prevent mud issues during rain/snow events. A general National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit or waiver and Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be implemented to reduce or eliminate runoff impacts during proposed construction activities and reduce the potential for soil erosion after construction.

The public comment period for the Draft EA was completed on July 18, 2011, with notice published in the Minot Daily News, Bismarck Tribune newspapers, and on FEMA's web site at <http://www.fema.gov/ehp/docs.shtm>. The Public Notice notified residents of the proposed project, the availability of the Draft EA, and the opportunity to comment.

## FINDINGS

FEMA has made the following determinations from the information contained in the Responder Support Camp Project EA:

The above described action will not result in any significant adverse impacts related to geology and soils; hydrology and floodplains; wetlands and jurisdictional waters of the U.S.; water quality; air quality; vegetation and wildlife; state and federally listed threatened and endangered species; cultural resources; socioeconomics (including minority and low income populations); safety and security; hazardous materials and toxic wastes; and traffic and transportation. The proposed alternative has been reviewed and, to the best of our knowledge, does not have the potential for significant cumulative effects when combined with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in accordance with 44 CFR Part 10.8 (d)(3)(x).

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

1. Use of Best Management Practices (e.g., installation of silt fences and straw bales) will be required to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation. A general National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit, or a waiver of the permit, must be obtained from the North Dakota Department of Health prior to the start of any work on the site.
2. In accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, if unanticipated historic or cultural materials are discovered during construction, all construction activities shall immediately cease within 100 feet of the materials until their cultural affiliation and ultimate disposition are determined in consultation with the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, FEMA Environmental Liaison Officer and other interested parties.
3. If any hazardous materials are found between start of construction and final site closure, all hazardous materials shall be remediated, abated, or disposed of as

appropriate, and otherwise handled in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

4. Contractor to provide for 24-hour security services at the Park during construction, if needed, as well as during occupation of the site by FEMA.
5. Contractor will coordinate with FEMA's Safety Officer prior to construction.
6. Contractor will maintain contact with the NDDOT District Engineer during occupation of the site by FEMA.
7. To minimize worker and public health and safety risks from project construction and closure, all construction and closure work will be done using qualified personnel trained in the proper use of construction equipment, including all appropriate safety precautions. Additionally, all activities will be conducted in a safe manner in accordance with the standards specified in Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations and the USACE safety manual.
8. The contractor will post appropriate signage and fencing to minimize potential adverse public safety concerns. Appropriate signage and barriers should be in place prior to construction activities in order to alert pedestrians and motorists of project activities and traffic pattern changes.
9. If the contractor chooses to use a borrow source that is not NDDOT Certified and/or from an existing stockpile, the following must occur prior to digging:
  1. State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) approval including completion and FEMA approval of required archeological surveys.
  2. The applicant shall notify the FEMA Regional Environmental Officer if any listed species or designated critical habitat might be affected or is in the vicinity of the project, and shall not begin work until notified by the FEMA Regional Environmental Officer that the requirements of the Endangered Species Act have been satisfied.
  3. Applicant is required to coordinate borrow pit locations with the USFWS Wetland District Manager to avoid project impacts to easements or public lands. Project Officer's have notified the Applicant of the requirement of proof of coordination and documentation.
  4. Applicant is responsible for ensuring that no borrow pit activity occurs in Waters of the United States, wetlands or a river listed on the Nationwide Rivers Inventory (NRI). Borrow pit activity occurring in a floodplain must not affect pre-existing hydrological profiles. If activities occur in prime farmland ground disturbance must be temporary, one time use, and no permanent loss of farmland may occur.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based upon the incorporated EA, and in accordance with Presidential Executive Orders 12898 (Environmental Justice), 11988 (Floodplain Management), and 11990 (Wetland Protection), FEMA has determined that the proposed action implemented with the conditions and mitigation measures outlined above and in the EA will not have any significant adverse effects on the quality of the natural and human environment. As a result of this FONSI, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared (44 CFR Part 10.8) and the proposed action alternative as described in the EA may proceed.

## APPROVAL:

**Appendix B - Figures**

Figure 1: All temporary housing sites

Figure 2: Responder Support Camp site locator map

Figure 3: Ward County zoning map

Figure 4: Responder Support Camp site on USGS map

Figure 5: Temporary housing sites and wetlands

Figure 6: Aerial photograph

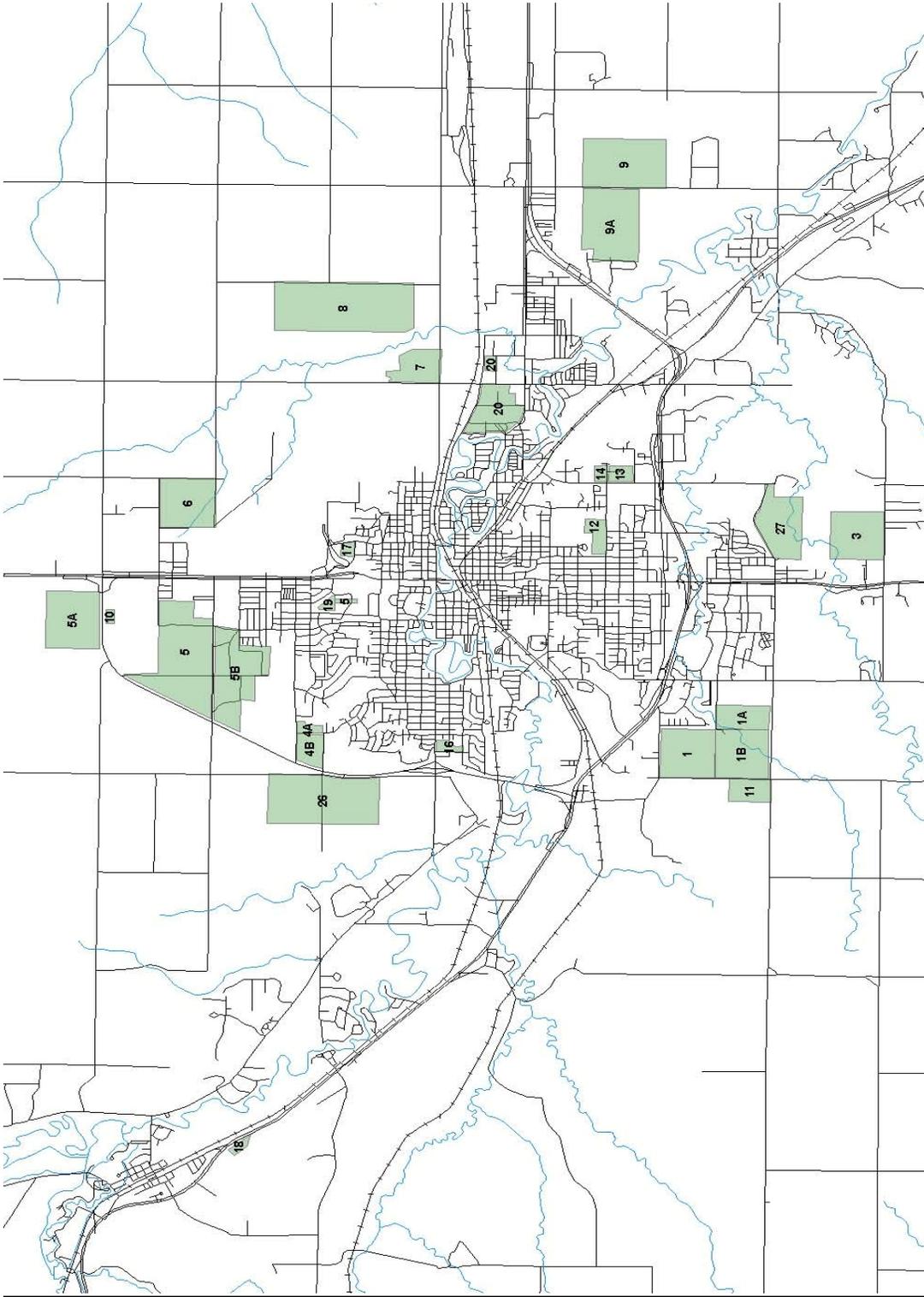


Figure 1 – All temporary housing sites. Site 8 is Responder Support Camp.

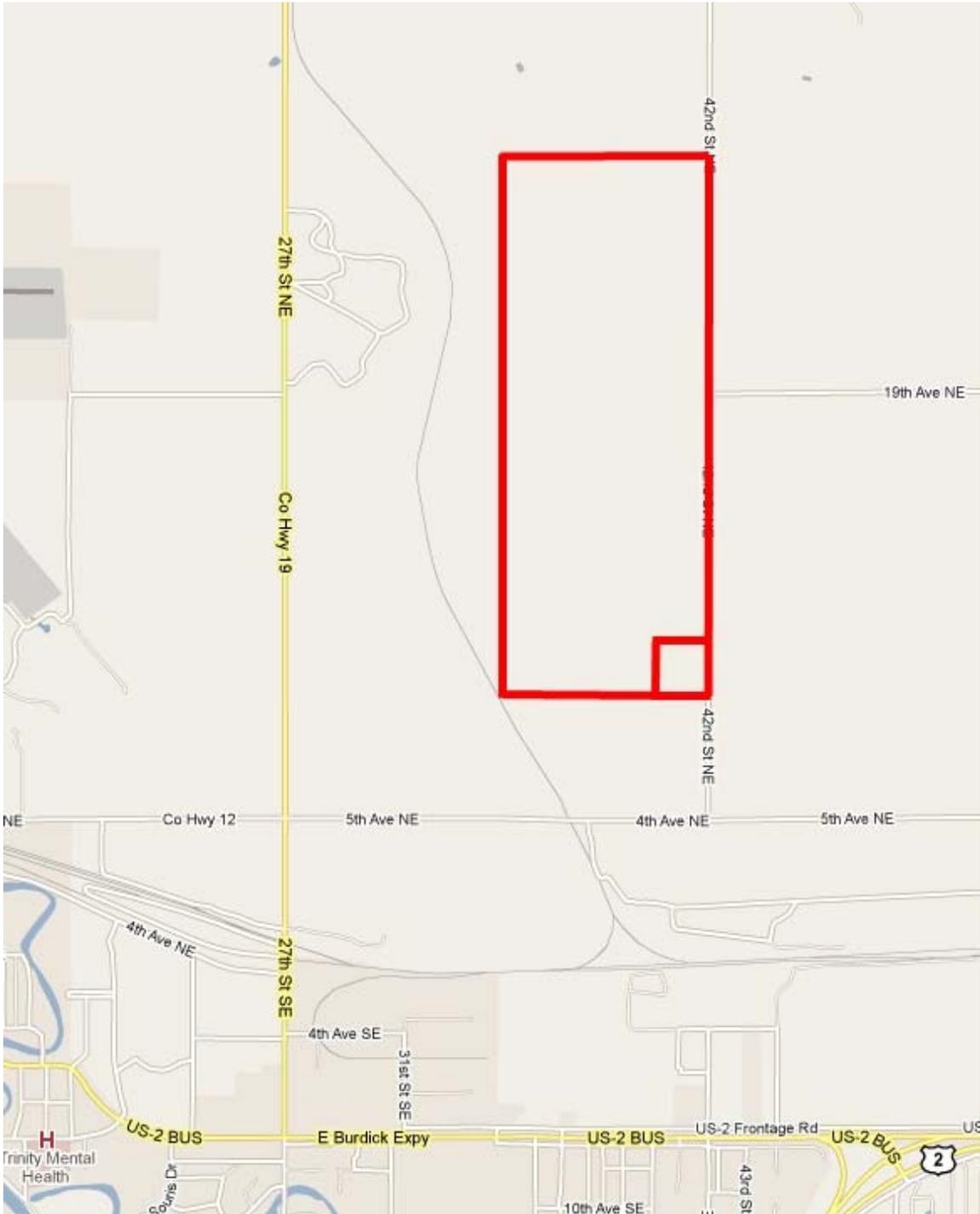


Figure 2 – Site locator map  
(lower right-hand corner is area of potential effect)

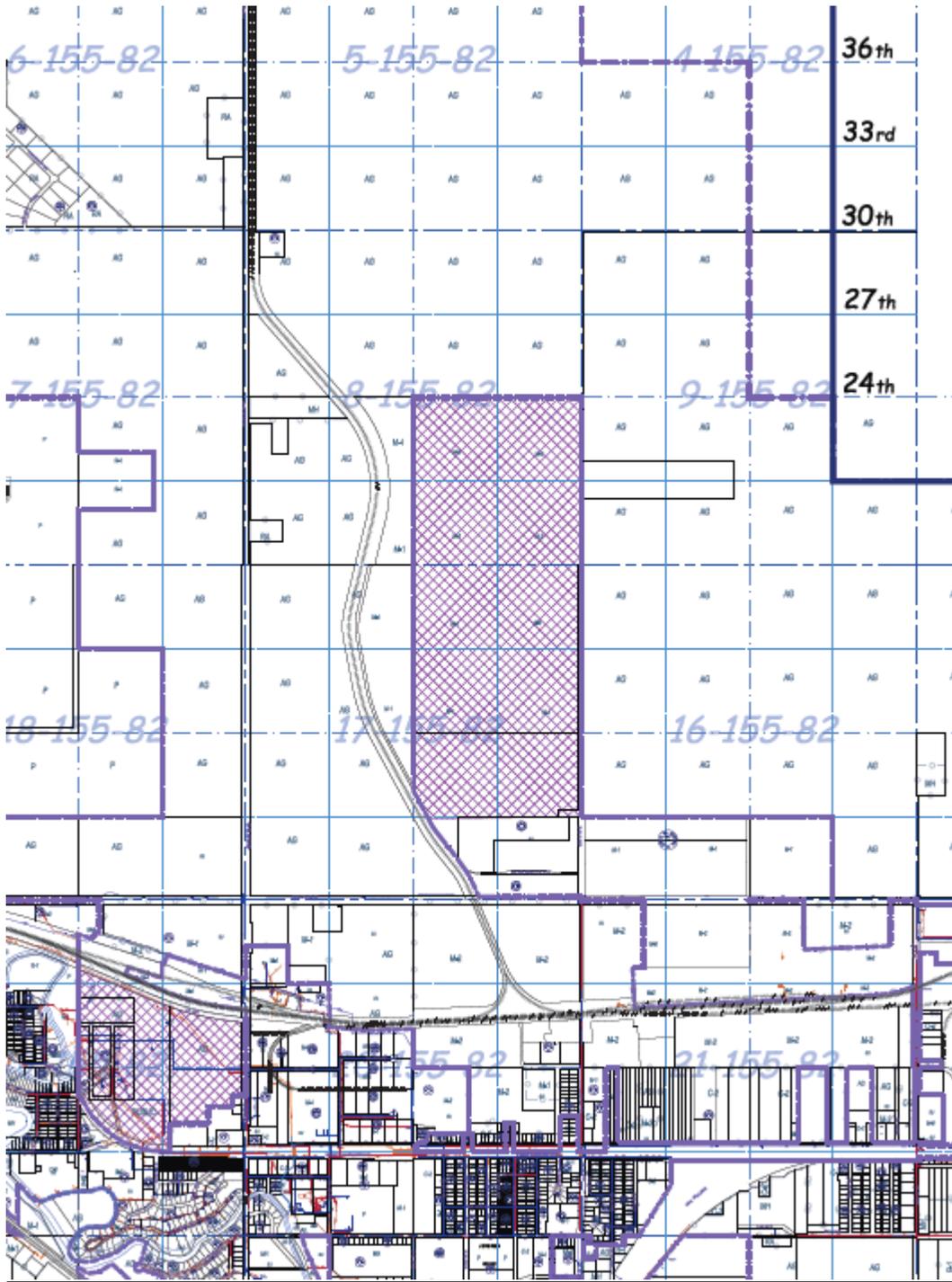


Figure 3 – Ward County zoning map

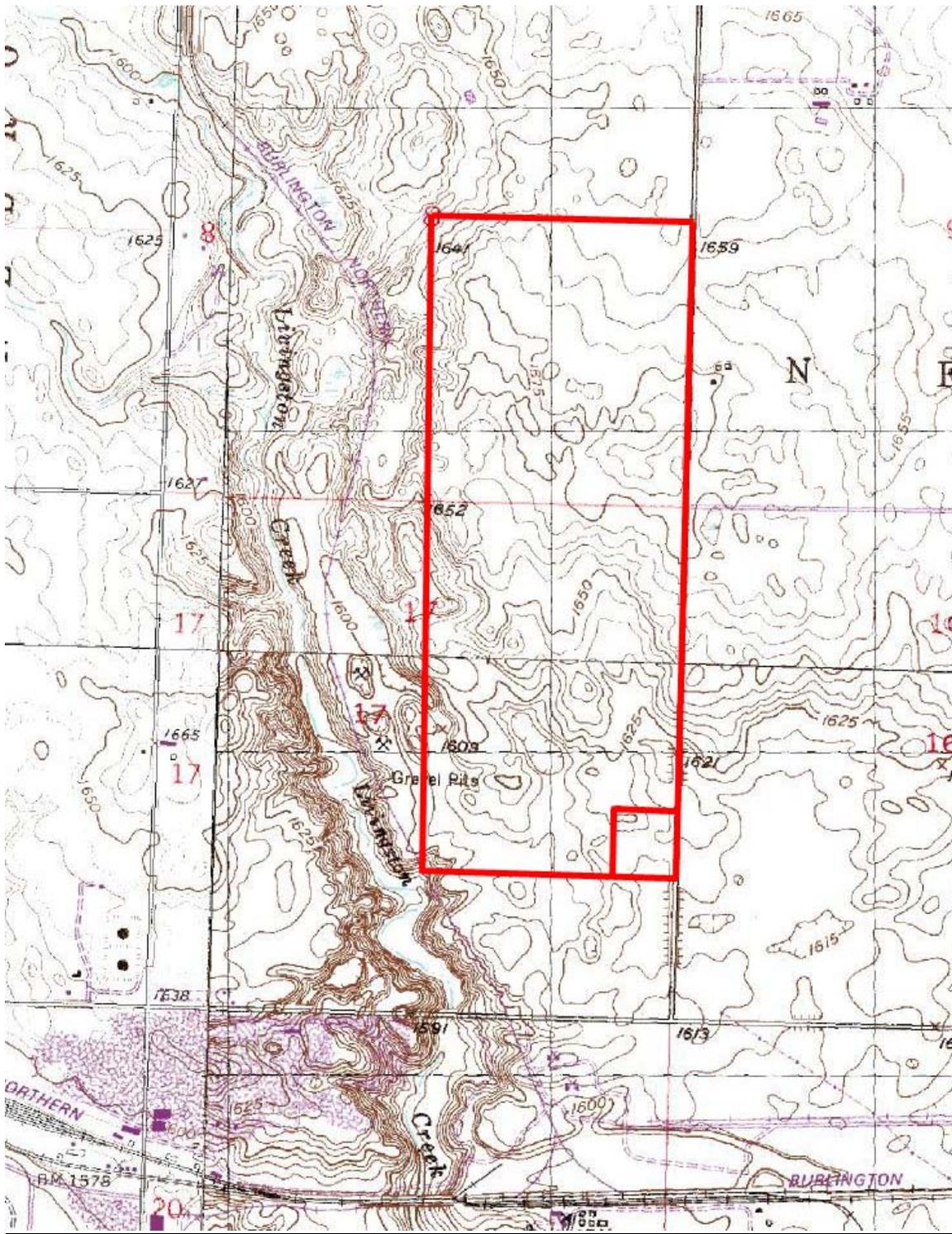


Figure 4 – Responder Support Camp site on USGS map  
(lower right-hand corner is area of potential effect)

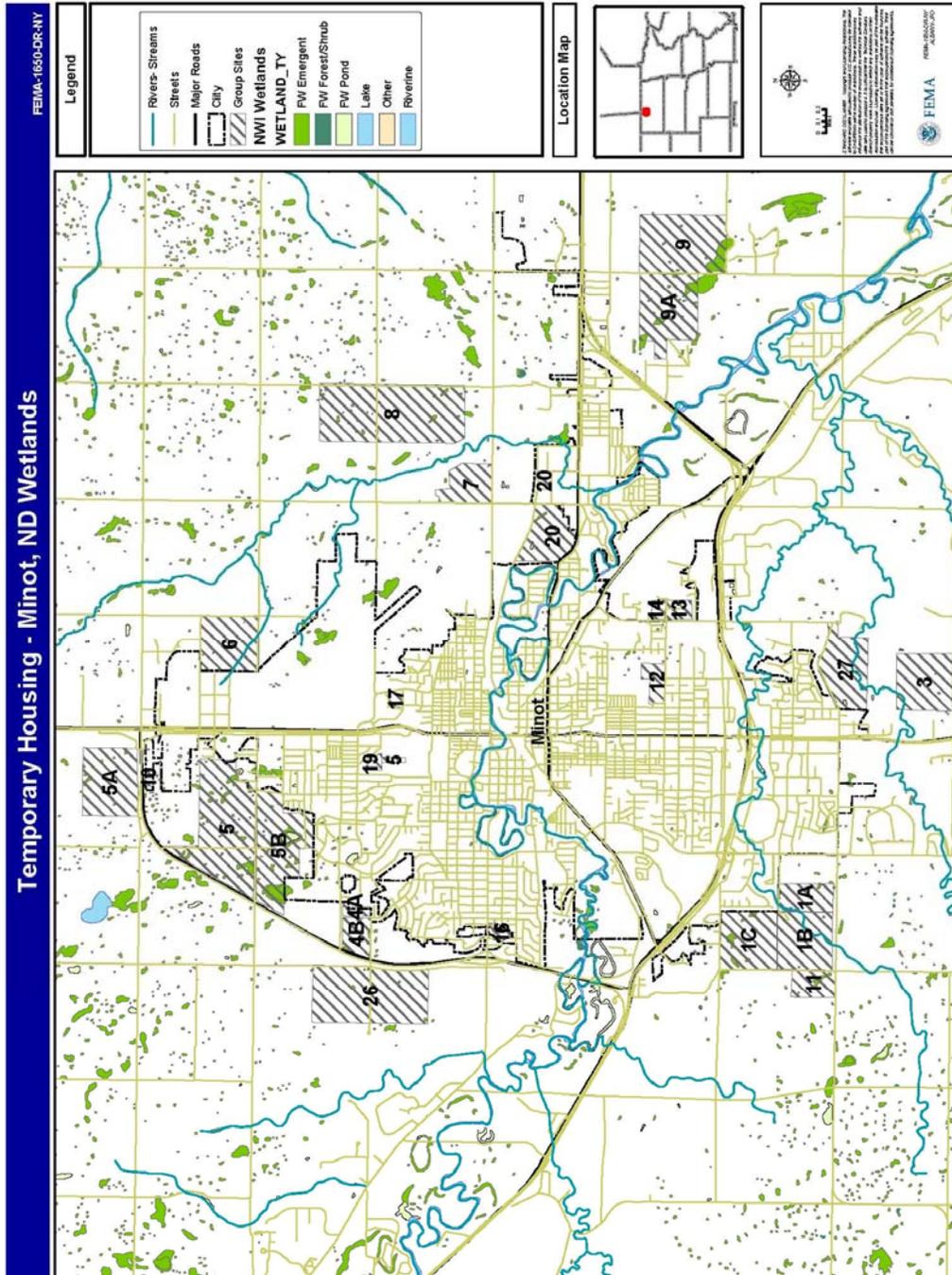


Figure 5 – Temporary housing sites and wetlands

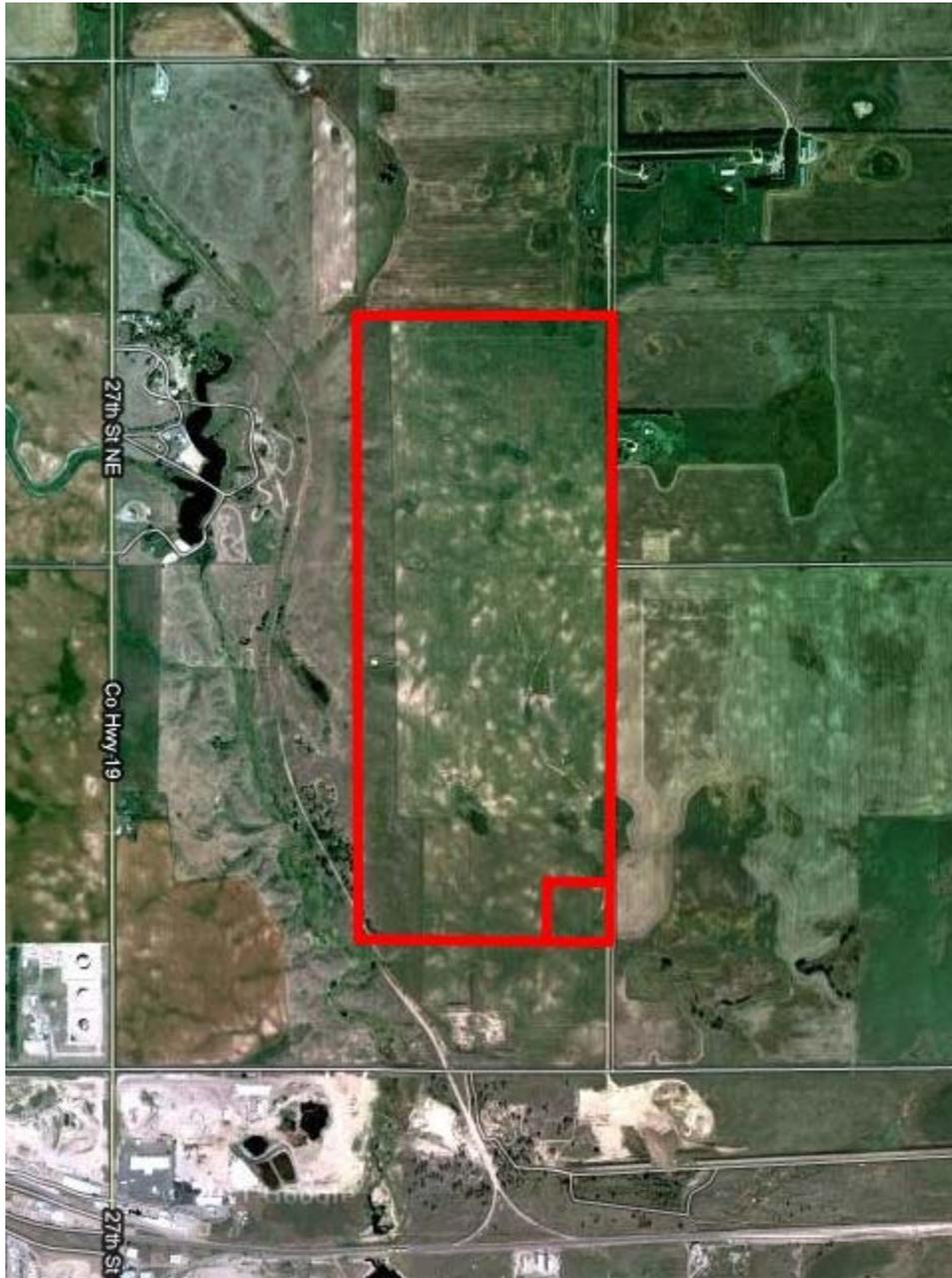


Figure 6 – Aerial photograph (lower right-hand corner is area of potential effect)