



**FEMA**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
EMERGENCY TEMPORARY HOUSING PROJECTS  
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. Section 408 of the Stafford Act authorizes FEMA's Individual Assistance (IA) Program to provide emergency temporary housing for disaster victims whose homes are uninhabitable. There are insufficient rental units available to house displaced disaster victims. The use of hotel rooms, shelters or staying with family/friends is only appropriate for a very limited time period. In response to this need, FEMA is proposing to build emergency disaster group housing for residents in the vicinity of Minot and Burlington, Ward County, North Dakota.

In order to implement its IA Program in a timely and effective manner, FEMA utilized an expedited process to assess the potential environmental impacts of building emergency temporary housing for displaced victims. An Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the President's Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and FEMA regulations for NEPA compliance (44 CFR Part 10). The EA's purpose is to analyze and document the proposed 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 proposed temporary housing sites are listed in the EA's Table 1. USACE contractors have been tasked with development of at least one site with a capacity of 150-200 mobile homes. At this time, site occupancy is expected to not exceed 18 months. The proposed group sites will include development of temporary gravel pads for housing foundations, school bus shelters, mailbox units, gravel and asphalt roadways, and all utilities related to the infrastructure of the community including a sewer system, waterline installation, phone, cable, and electric. Access to the sites from surrounding roads along with internal circulation will also be designed in coordination with applicable city and county staff. 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. FEMA expects that the mobile homes will be hauled from the site to suitable locations elsewhere (to be determined on a case-by-case basis) when the temporary housing need ends. The site will then be seeded or used by the property owner in a manner consistent with applicable land use approvals.

The public comment period for the Draft EA was from July 22 to July 25, 2011, with notice published in the Minot Daily News, Bismarck Tribune newspapers, Grand Forks Herald, Williston Herald 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 Souris Basin Emergency Temporary Housing 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. The construction contractor would be required to identify and implement specific Best Management Practices (BMPs) (e.g., installation of silt fences, hay bales, etc.) to reduce or eliminate runoff impacts during proposed construction activities and to reduce the potential for soil erosion after construction. In order to convey storm water runoff, the design contractor will be required to design drainage features so that flows will not flood site residents or surrounding properties during storm events. The drainage system will be required to meet local and county requirements, including the acquisition of easements if applicable. 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. Temporary roads on the site during construction should be constructed of permeable asphalt like millings, gravel, or similar material to reduce airborne particles. Periodic wetting during construction and home removal would reduce fugitive dust. The contractor shall appropriately cover any fill stored on site during unit installation or removal. These measures would help reduce air quality impacts on asthmatics, seniors, and other sensitive residents.
4. 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.
5. If necessary, noise reduction measures would be instituted. These measures include: 1) using a 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. construction time frame for Temporary Housing Site 16, with no construction activities on Sundays. Site 16 is located in an urban residential area and is land owned by the St.

John the Apostle Catholic Church, which is directly adjacent; 2) completing construction closest to potential sensitive receptors first; and/or 3) completing noisier activities during the day if using a 24-hour schedule for those sites in rural areas.

6. Safety and security mitigation measures would include the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs), implementation of approved safety and management plans, phased construction, UFAS considerations, and appropriate signage and fencing. The fencing and gates shall not impede or hinder future restoration work. 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. The contractor will also place fencing around the site perimeter to protect residents from vehicular traffic on surrounding roads and will provide 24-hour security services at the site during construction, if needed. 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 Occupation Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations. Emergency shelters should be included in the group site to accommodate the residents of the mobile homes including individuals with limited mobility and disability. Temporary guard shacks should be constructed at construction sites to protect residents. Once constructed the larger temporary housing communities would included an onsite office trailer.
7. Contractor will coordinate with FEMA's Safety Officer prior to construction.
8. Due to the increased traffic volume associated with the construction vehicles and temporary residents, the contractor would need to work with the City Public Works Department and the Ward and McHenry County Road and Bridge Supervisor to assure that the local level of service on the roadway remains adequate. The contractor should design the roadways to allow multiple ingresses and egresses to sites. The roads and lane widths should be designed to allow ample room for fire and emergency apparatus to pass as defined by local codes. The roadways should at a minimum be graveled and compacted to facilitate maintenance and upkeep, local environment, traffic volume, and usage.

## 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:

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Steven Hardegen, RVIII Environmental Officer

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Date