



FEMA

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Louisiana Recovery Office
1 Seine Court
New Orleans, Louisiana 70114

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
RECONSTRUCTION AT AN ALTERNATE LOCATION
LSU AGCENTER COASTAL AREA RESEARCH STATION
PLAQUEMINES PARISH LOUISIANA
FEMA-1603-DR-LA (HURRICANE KATRINA)**

Introduction

Hurricane Katrina made landfall on August 29, 2005, in southeast Louisiana near Buras-Triumph, Plaquemines Parish as a Category 3 storm. Maximum sustained winds at landfall were estimated at 120 miles per hour and were accompanied by strong and damaging storm surge well above normal high tide. President George W. Bush declared a major disaster for the State of Louisiana and signed a disaster declaration (FEMA-1603-DR-LA) on August 29, 2005, authorizing the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide federal assistance in designated areas of Louisiana.

The State of Louisiana Facility Planning and Control (FP&C) requested through the State of Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) that FEMA provide disaster assistance through the provision of federal grant funding pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act), PL 93-288, as amended. Section 406 of the Stafford Act authorizes FEMA's Public Assistance Program to fund projects to repair, restore, and replace facilities damaged as a result of the declared event.

FP&C was deemed eligible by FEMA for federal disaster public assistance as an eligible applicant serving the needs of the general public. Before Hurricane Katrina, the LSU AgCenter Citrus Research Station in Port Sulphur, Louisiana in Plaquemines Parish provided facilities for research on citrus, fruits, and termites. The facility and its contents were damaged as a result of the declared event and FEMA deemed them eligible for repair and/or replacement. The station has now been renamed the Coastal Area Research Station (CARS) to better reflect the post-storm expanded research emphasis planned.

The damaged CARS is located at 22193 Highway 23, Port Sulphur, Louisiana. The station's initial focus was citrus research; however, it is now investigating coastal plants and the role these plants have in the state's fight against coastal erosion. Station researchers are investigating plant varieties such as smooth cordgrass and are trying to select and breed those plants that have the most beneficial characteristics and traits that will help protect or restore areas of the state that have experienced land loss. Facilities at

the CARS included residential buildings, greenhouses, pump houses, a chemical storage building, a shop/storage building, an office, sheds, ponds, and other appurtenant facilities.

FP&C determined that reconstruction of the facility to its predisaster configuration in its existing location would not best meet the needs of the community. FP&C requested approval and federal grant funds for an alternate project to replace the eligible facilities with facilities providing similar functions at the LSU AgCenter Hill Farm Research Station in Claiborne Parish, approximately 40 miles northeast of Shreveport, Louisiana. The proposed action includes construction of a 2,400 square foot poultry litter barn, repair of site fences, and demolition of three (3) structures (Buildings 10706, 10709, and 10710).

In accordance with 44 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) for FEMA, Subpart B – Agency Implementing Procedures, Section 10.9, an Environmental Assessment (EA) is being prepared pursuant to Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as implemented by the regulations promulgated by the President’s Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508). This EA will determine if the proposed alternate project for the CARS facilities will have the potential for significant adverse effects on the quality of the human and natural environment at or near the proposed project. The results of this EA are being used to make a decision whether to initiate preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or to prepare a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

Findings

The above described action would not result in significant adverse impacts related to geology, soils, hydrology, floodplains, wetlands, water quality, air quality, vegetation, wildlife, state and federally listed threatened and endangered species, cultural resources, socioeconomics (including minority and low income populations), safety, security, noise, hazardous materials, toxic wastes, traffic, or transportation. Based on the information analyzed, FEMA has determined that the implementation of the proposed action would not result in significant adverse impacts to the quality of the natural and human environment. The proposed alternative is not anticipated to 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). As a result of this FONSI, an EIS will not be prepared (44 CFR Part 10) and the proposed action as described in the EA may proceed.

CONDITIONS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Based upon the studies, reviews and consultations undertaken in this environmental assessment, several conditions and mitigation measures must be taken by the applicant prior to and during proposed project implementation.

- The applicant must follow all applicable local, state, and federal laws, regulations and requirements and obtain and comply with all required permits and approvals prior to initiating work.
- FEMA Public Assistance grant funded projects carried out in the base floodplain or affecting the base floodplain must be coordinated with the local floodplain administrator for a floodplain development permit and the action must be undertaken in compliance with relevant, applicable and required local codes and standards and thereby, will reduce the risk of future flood loss, minimize the impacts of floods on safety, health, and welfare, and preserve and possibly restore beneficial floodplain values as required by Executive Order 11988.
- If during the course of work, archaeological artifacts (prehistoric or historic) or human remains are discovered, the applicant shall stop work in the vicinity of the discovery and take all reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm to the finds. The applicant shall inform their Public Assistance (PA) contacts at FEMA, who will in turn contact FEMA Historic Preservation (HP) staff. The applicant will not proceed with work until FEMA HP completes consultation with the SHPO. In addition, if unmarked graves are present, compliance with the Louisiana Unmarked Human Burial Sites Preservation Act (R.S. 8:671 et seq.) is required. The applicant shall notify the law enforcement agency of the jurisdiction where the remains are located within twenty-four (24) hours of the discovery. The applicant shall also notify FEMA and the Louisiana Division of Archaeology at (225) 342-8170 within seventy-two (72) hours of the discovery. Failure to comply with these stipulations may jeopardize receipt of FEMA funding.
- To minimize air quality impacts, FP&C and its contractors must implement Best Management Practices to limit air emissions, fugitive dust and exhaust. BMPs would include maintaining and covering spoil piles, covering the loads of haul vehicles and keeping construction equipment properly tuned.
- FP&C and its contractors must ensure project activities are conducted in a safe manner and in compliance with all state and federal occupational safety regulations, including OSHA, to protect workers and the general public.
- Project construction would involve the use of potentially hazardous materials (*e.g.*, petroleum products, cement, caustics, acids, solvents, paint, electronic components, pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, treated timber) and may result in

the generation of small volumes of hazardous wastes. Appropriate measures to prevent, minimize, and control spills of hazardous materials must be taken and generated hazardous and non-hazardous wastes are required to be disposed in accordance with applicable federal, state and local regulations.

- If any solid or hazardous wastes, or soils and/or groundwater contaminated with hazardous constituents are encountered during the project, notification to LDEQ's Single-Point-of-Contact at (225) 219-3640 is required. Additionally, precautions should be taken to protect workers from these hazardous conditions.

Approvals:

Katherine Zeringue, Environmental Liaison Officer
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FEMA-1603/1607-DR-LA

Date

Joseph Threat, Executive Director
Louisiana Recovery Office
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Date