



Draft Environmental Assessment

FEMA Region 4 Temporary Group Housing

Deep Blue Group Site

FEMA DR-4673-FL

Lee County, Florida

May 2023



FEMA

**U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Federal Emergency Management Agency Region 4
Atlanta, Georgia**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

APE	Area of Potential Effect
BFE	Base Flood Elevation
BGEPA	Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BMP	Best Management Practices
CAA	Clean Air Act
CBIA	Coastal Barrier Improvement Act
CBRA	Coastal Barrier Resource Act
CATEX	Categorical Exclusion
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CWA	Clean Water Act
CZMA	Coastal Zone Management Act
CZM	Coastal Zone Management
dBA	Decibels
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DL	Direct Lease
DOT	Department of Transportation
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
EO	Executive Order

EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ERP	Environmental Resource Permit
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FBB	Florida Bonneted Bat
FCMP	Florida Coastal Management Program
FDEP	Florida Department of Environmental Protection
FDOT	Florida Department of Transportation
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act
FWC	Florida Wildlife Conservation Commission
GHGs	Greenhouse Gases
GSA	General Service Administration
HUD	Housing and Urban Development
IHP	Individuals and Housing Program
IPAC	Information for Planning and Consultation
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MHU	Manufactured Housing Unit
MLR	Multi-Family Lease and Repair Program
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAGPRA	Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act

NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NPL	National Priorities List
NPS	National Park System
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NWSRS	National Wild and Scenic Rivers System
OPA	Otherwise Protected Area
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PL	Public Law
PPI	Pre-Placement Interview
RAR	Resources at Risk
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RHA	Rivers and Harbors Act
ROW	Right of Way
SFHA	Special Flood Hazard Area
SFWMD	South Florida Water Management District
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Protection Program
THPO	Tribal Historic Preservation Office
TT	Travel Trailer
TTHU	Temporary Transportable Housing Unit

U.S.	United States
UFAS	Uniform Federal Accessibility Standard
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USC	United States Code
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
VOCs	Volatile Organic Compounds
WOTUS	Waters of the U.S.
WSR	Wild and Scenic River
WSRA	Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Hurricane Ian incident period was between September 23, 2022, and November 4, 2022. It brought strong winds, heavy rains, storm surge, and flooding throughout Florida. President Biden signed a disaster declaration (FEMA-4673-DR-FL) on September 29, 2022, authorizing the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide federal assistance to the designated areas of Florida (recipient). This assistance is provided pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act), and Public Law (PL) 93-288, as amended. Section 408 of the Stafford Act authorizes FEMA's Individuals and Households Program (IHP) to provide emergency and temporary housing for eligible disaster survivors, whose homes are uninhabitable or destroyed as a result of the declared event.

Hurricane storm force winds in excess of 145 mph, rainfall greater than 10 inches, and storm surge greater than 15 feet resulted in catastrophic damage throughout Lee County, Florida. To provide temporary housing solutions for survivors of Hurricane Ian, the State of Florida requested assistance from FEMA in the form of Direct Temporary Housing (Direct Housing or Housing Assistance) through the IHP. FEMA authorized housing assistance for a period of up to 18 months in the following counties for Hurricane Ian: Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Hardee, Lee, Sarasota, and Volusia. FEMA's Direct Housing involves a variety of temporary housing solutions, including the Multi-Family Lease and Repair Program (MLR), Direct Lease (DL), and Transportable Temporary Housing Units (TTHUs), which have been approved for implementation in the designated counties. TTHUs may be provided in the form of travel trailers (TTs) or manufactured housing units (MHUs).

When survivors' private lots are not feasible and commercial parks are unavailable or insufficient to meet the housing need, FEMA may construct a 'Group Site' in order to provide Direct Temporary Housing Assistance in the form of multiple, grouped TTHUs. Group Sites will often involve the lease of land and the installation of TTHUs, including construction of individual TTHU pads; ingress, egress, and circulation roads; any necessary upgrades for individual TTHUs to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act; concrete parking lots; facility lighting; water, sanitation, and electrical utilities; and a perimeter privacy fence.

The proposed location of the Deep Blue Group Site would be located at 10300 Stringfellow Road, St. James City, Florida 33956 (GPS Coordinates: 26.611149, -82.114202). The proposed action does not qualify for use of DHS Categorical Exclusion (CATEX) (N16) for federal assistance for disaster temporary group housing of less than five acres because the site will encompass 16.77 acres.

This draft Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, (PL 91-190, as amended), and its implementing

regulations 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1500 to 1508), promulgated by the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), and FEMA's procedures for implementing NEPA (FEMA Instruction 108-1-1). FEMA is required to consider potential environmental impacts before funding or approving actions and projects. This draft EA will analyze the potential environmental impacts of the proposed temporary group site, Deep Blue Group Site, as part of an expedited review process. 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).

The scope of FEMA's environmental review includes evaluating project alternatives, characterizing the affected environment, identifying potential environmental impacts, and outlining ways to reduce or minimize adverse impacts. This draft EA examines the site-specific environmental impacts associated with building a proposed FEMA Temporary group site on private or publicly owned land to be leased by the General Service Administration (GSA) for this purpose. This draft EA was prepared based on a site evaluation, document research and resource agency information. The public participation period will be brief, as necessitated by the emergency circumstances. Agency coordination and consultation will be deemed complete at the end of the public comment period. FEMA believes that this process will allow for sufficient action analysis while meeting the goal of providing timely federal assistance to disaster survivors.

2.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

The objective of FEMA's Individuals and Households Program is to expeditiously provide temporary housing for eligible disaster survivors. As of April 20, 2023, 13,853 households within Lee County meet Pre-Placement Interview (PPI) threshold criteria, of which 861 households have been approved for Direct Housing Assistance. As of April 20, 2023, only 597 households are currently occupying units with 210 Direct Lease, 208 on a private site, and 179 in a commercial site. This leaves a shortfall of 264 households in Lee County still in need of assistance.

Some of the demand for housing may be met by repairing and improving existing multi-family housing, to be utilized as temporary housing; placing an MHU on an applicant's private site; or providing them with an MHU on an available pad leased in a commercial park. However, these methods do not meet the total need for direct housing assistance in Lee County. Therefore, to provide temporary housing for the remaining unhoused households in Lee County, FEMA has identified the need to develop temporary group sites.

In accordance with federal laws and FEMA regulations, the EA process for a proposed federal action must include an evaluation of alternatives and a discussion of the potential environmental impacts. This draft EA was prepared in accordance with FEMA's regulations as required under NEPA. As part of this NEPA review, the requirements of other environmental laws and executive orders (EOs) are addressed.

3.0 PROJECT LOCATION AND BACKGROUND

The property resides in Lee County at 10300 Stringfellow Road, St. James City, Florida 33956 (GPS Coordinates: 26.611149, -82.114202). The proposed site is composed of two separate parcels. The Northern most parcel (# 28-44-22-L3-00036.0000) is approximately 4.87 acres and is rectangular in shape. The northern boundary of this parcel abuts Pine Island Road. The southern extent abuts the second parcel of the Deep Blue Group Site. This southern parcel (28-44-22-L3-00036.0000) is approximately 11.90 acres and is rectangular in shape with a small protruding portion on the southwestern corner. This parcel is bounded by Stringfellow Road along the west and Betsy Parkway along the east. Center Plaza Road abuts the entirety of the southern boundary of this parcel (Appendix A).

The site is situated within unincorporated Lee County within the community of St. James City, Florida, in a low- to medium-density urban space on Pine Island. Pine Island is one of the many barrier islands situated in the vicinity of the Caloosahatchee River delta. The entirety of the site is located within the 1% annual chance floodplain, also known as Zone AE. The site is currently zoned for general commercial and community commercial use and appears to be well-maintained. The site consists mostly of regularly maintained herbaceous vegetation and is surrounded on the western edge by mesic pine flatwoods with sporadic mature pine trees occurring throughout the southern parcel. The western portion of the site consists of invasive mixed hardwoods. The northern parcel of the site was intended to be developed as a commercial storage facility.

Utilities exist north of the project site. Adjacent utilities would be extended to the project site to provide service to the proposed MHUs. Typical site conditions and adjoining properties are depicted in Appendix A.

4.0 ALTERNATIVES

The alternatives considered in addressing the purpose and need stated are the No Action Alternative (Alternative 1) and the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 2), which is to develop the Deep Blue Group Site with MHUs. Concurrent to the Preferred Action Alternative, other federally assisted housing options are being utilized first by FEMA's IHP, including minor home repairs, rental assistance, and installing a TTHU on a private site or at an existing commercial site. These options are rapidly depleting due to the high demand for housing; therefore, the remaining alternative is to build an emergency and temporary group site where the above options do not satisfy the demand.

To expedite the group site selection process, FEMA has worked closely with local officials and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to identify potential sites, followed by a cursory site reconnaissance and research to determine site suitability. Important factors considered in choosing a site include:

- demand for temporary housing in the area;
- group acceptance;
- proximity of services and amenities (schools, healthcare facilities, public transportation, etc.);
- engineering and construction feasibility;
- access to utilities;
- land use compatibilities;
- property owner lease;
- costs to develop and maintain the site, and;
- environmental and cultural resource sensitivities.

FEMA continues to evaluate alternative sites in Lee County. Although various alternatives continue to be identified, the amount of needed housing has limited this draft EA to analysis of one suitable site alternative at this time. The Deep Blue Group Site was selected for further detailed analysis because it meets the basic site feasibility and selection criteria. Other group sites were considered but were deemed infeasible for various reasons including proximity to core populations in need of housing assistance; location within a coastal high hazard area; property size limitations; access to utilities; and willingness of landowners to sign a lease agreement with FEMA.

4.1 Alternative 1: No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, FEMA would not develop a temporary group site. Displaced residents would remain without a stable housing accommodation. Survivors may continue to leverage less than desirable housing options, including but not limited to, staying with relatives or friends, in hotels, their damaged dwellings, tents, personal vehicles, mass shelters, places of worship, place of employment, or in other temporary locations until they resolve their long-term housing needs. The future environmental condition of the site would be at the discretion of the property owner. This alternative may jeopardize public health, safety, and well-being of the community and does not satisfy the purpose and need of the direct housing mission. The No Action Alternative will continue to be evaluated throughout this EA and serve as a baseline comparison of impacts from other action alternatives.

4.2 Alternative 2: Develop the Deep Blue Group Site with MHUs (Preferred Alternative)

Under the Preferred Alternative, FEMA would provide temporary group housing in the form of MHUs for eligible disaster survivors displaced by Hurricane Ian in Lee County at 10300 Stringfellow Road, St. James City, Florida 33956 (GPS Coordinates: 26.611149, -82.114202). Disaster survivors would be temporarily relocated to the site with an expected occupancy of up to 18 months from the date of the disaster declaration, or when the IHP ends, including a site deactivation period.

Development at this site would allow displaced residents to remain within relative proximity of their damaged dwellings and communities. The disaster survivors would retain access to reasonable commuting times to their workplaces, schools, childcare, places of worship, familiar food and shopping services, laundry facilities, playgrounds, and pet areas.

The Preferred Alternative would involve the placement of up to 40 MHUs at the project site. Development of the site would require the installation of utilities, construction of gravel roadways and parking lots, placement of stone-base and concrete for pads, residential parking, and associated appurtenances. The following specific site development components would be included with this project:

- Construction of the group site would involve removal of vegetation to grade; addition of fill; and installation of roads, MHU pads, and miscellaneous site amenities. The wooded area along the eastern property line would be cleared to the extent required for stormwater management. The site has been arranged to avoid areas presenting wetland characteristics.
- Sewage management would require the inclusion of individual grinder pumps, installed either above grade or buried in the fill section. Grinder pumps would discharge to small diameter, lower pressure force mains buried in the fill section. The group site force main would tie into the existing Lee County force main located on the east side of Stringfellow Road.
- Water mains would be installed in the fill section and connect to the existing Greater Pine Island Water District's system at the northern property line and Stringfellow Road.
- Lee County Cooperative would add wooden utility poles or run conduit above grade or buried in the fill section to provide electricity to the group site and would install metering locations throughout the site. The FEMA Logistics Contractor would install circuits from the utility meter to service drops to each MHU. Possible electric utility routes would be from the north or south of the property.
- The site fill would be graded to convey stormwater overland to the wooded and open areas located through the property. Part of the stormwater management area would be cleared, and a berm constructed to retain stormwater prior to controlled release.
- Below grade excavation would be limited to existing Pine Island Road Right of Way (ROW) for utility connections.
- MHUs would be elevated above the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) plus one foot to meet the State freeboard requirement.
- All of the units could potentially meet Unified Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS), and all of the on-site essential services and facilities (such as mailbox kiosk) will be UFAS compatible.
- Erosion control would be established during the construction period and a perimeter fence would be constructed around the project site.

FEMA would operate and maintain the site during the term of occupancy. When the temporary housing need ends, FEMA expects the MHUs would be removed from the site and returned to a FEMA storage facility. The project site would then be seeded and reasonably restored to its previous condition, per the lease terms with the landowner. Relevant construction exhibits related to this alternative can be found in Appendix B.

4.3 Alternatives Considered and Dismissed

Pursuant to NEPA, this draft EA is required to consider and analyze the potential environmental impacts of the Preferred Alternative, No Action Alternative, and additional reasonable alternatives when applicable. Reasonable alternatives are defined as technically and economically feasible and meet the purpose and need for the proposed action as described in section 2.0 of this draft EA. Evaluation of the following alternatives are subject to screening criteria (selection standards) suitable for the proposed action. These criteria may include requirements or constraints associated with operational, technical, environmental, budgetary, and time factors. Those alternatives determined not reasonable can be dismissed from detailed analysis in this draft EA.

The Deep Blue Group Site was selected for further detailed analysis because it meets the basic site feasibility and selection criteria. Five additional group sites, Lockett/Ortiz, Library Way, Glades, Heritage Heights, and an additional Pine Island Group Site (Pine Island North) are being dismissed from this review. Four of these alternatives, Lockett/Ortiz, Library Way, Glades, and Heritage Heights are being considered in conjunction with the Deep Blue Group Site to address the total demand for housing in Lee County. These sites are located in different regions of the county and will service separate populations of survivors. The fifth, Pine Island North Group Site, would service the same Pine Island population of survivors as the Deep Blue Group Site; therefore, only one of the two Pine Island group sites would be constructed. The Pine Island North Group Site is further away from the community and wrap around services making the Deep Blue Group Site more favorable for survivors. Furthermore, the Pine Island North Group Site has more logistical issues including constructing water and sewage access. As such, the Pine Island North Group Site is dismissed from consideration.

4.4 Impact Evaluation

The CEQ notes: “Effects includes ecological (such as the effects on natural resources and on the components, structures, and functioning of affected ecosystems), aesthetic, historic, cultural, economic, social, or health, whether direct, indirect, or cumulative. Effects may also include those resulting from actions which may have both beneficial and detrimental effects, even if on balance the agency believes the effect will be beneficial” (40 CFR §1508.8).

When possible, quantitative information is provided to establish potential impacts; otherwise, the potential qualitative impacts are evaluated based on the criteria listed in Table 4.5.1 below.

Table 4.5.1: Impact Significance and Context Evaluation Criteria for Potential Impacts

Impact Scale	Criteria
None/Negligible	The resource area would not be affected and there would be no impact, OR changes or benefits would either be 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, but the changes would be small and localized. Impacts or benefits 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 either localized or regional scale impacts/benefits. Impacts would be within or below regulatory standards, but historical conditions would be altered on a short-term basis. Mitigation measures would be necessary, and the measures would reduce any potential adverse effects.
Major	Changes to the resource would be readily measurable and would have substantial consequences/benefits on a local or 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.

The impact analysis in this draft EA evaluates the potential environmental direct and indirect impact of the No Action Alternative and the Preferred Alternative. A summary table of the potential impacts of Alternative 1 and 2 is provided in Table 4.5.2 below.

Table 4.5.2: Environmental Consequences and Environmental Protection Measures and Required Permits by Environmental Resource

Resource and Resource Type	Environmental Consequence	Environmental Protection Measures and Required Permits
Physical Resource: Geology and Soils, and Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA)	Alternative 1: <i>No Impact</i> Alternative 2: <i>Negligible Impact – Not Significant</i>	Not applicable.
Physical Resource: Air Quality and Clean Air Act (CAA)	Alternative 1: <i>No Impact</i> Alternative 2: <i>Minor Adverse Impact – Not Significant</i>	For Alternative 2, construction and equipment-generated fugitive dust would be controlled using standard construction best management practices (BMPs), including watering of exposed surfaces and enclosing or covering stockpiled material. Adherence to FDEP air quality standards and regulations during the construction and operation of the group site would be followed.
Physical Resource: Climate Change	Alternative 1: <i>No Impact</i> Alternative 2: <i>Negligible Impact – Not Significant</i>	Not applicable.
Water Resources: Clean Water Act (CWA) and Surface Water	Alternative 1: <i>No Impact</i> Alternative 2: <i>Minor Impact – Not Significant</i>	For Alternative 2, use of best management practices (BMPs) during construction to minimize impacts would be implemented, appropriate permits would be acquired, and guidelines would be followed to minimize stormwater impacts such as installation of silt fencing around the construction site, disturbed soil would be protected with seed or sod and fill material stored on-site would be appropriately covered. A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit and a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) would be required for Alternative 2, and the contractor would coordinate with the SFWMD and Lee County prior to initiating work.

Resource and Resource Type	Environmental Consequence	Environmental Protection Measures and Required Permits
Water Resource: Floodplain Management (EO 11988)	Alternative 1: <i>No Impact</i> Alternative 2: <i>Minor Adverse Impact – Not Significant</i>	For Alternative 2, MHUs would be elevated to the BFE plus one foot of freeboard; MHUs would have open column bases; and roadways would be graveled to reduce the amount impermeable surface on site. FEMA would coordinate with the local Floodplain Administrator to ensure project complies with the no adverse impact principle.
Water Resource: Protection of Wetlands (EO 11990) and Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSR)	Alternative 1: <i>No Impact</i> Alternative 2: <i>Negligible Impact – Not Significant</i>	For Alternative 2, a stormwater management system would be designed so the project would not cause adverse water quality or off-site flooding impacts, cause or contribute to violations of surface water standards, including any anti-degradation provisions, and any special standards. The contractor would obtain all requisite local, state, and federal permits and authorizations before proceeding. Wetlands identified by the FEMA Logistics contractors and USACE personnel will be avoided, including a 25-foot buffer.
Water Resource: Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) and Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA)	Alternative 1: <i>No Impact</i> Alternative 2: <i>Negligible Impact – Not Significant</i>	All federal activities in the state will obtain Coastal Zone Management (CZM) consistency through the Florida Coastal Management Program (FCMP) by obtaining all appropriate state permits prior to construction.
Water Resource: Drinking Water and Groundwater	Alternative 1: <i>No Impact – Not Significant</i> Alternative 2: <i>Negligible Impact – Not Significant</i>	For Alternative 2, any potential hazardous materials used and hazardous wastes generated during construction would be managed in accordance with applicable environmental compliance regulations to prevent releases to groundwater.

Resource and Resource Type	Environmental Consequence	Environmental Protection Measures and Required Permits
Biological Resource: Fish and Wildlife	Alternative 1: <i>No Impact</i> Alternative 2: <i>Minor Impact – Not Significant</i>	For Alternative 2, noise generated during construction activities would be limited to daylight hours, limiting the duration of disturbance to wildlife. Gopher tortoises, burrowing owls or their burrows found by the FEMA Logistics contractors and USACE personnel would be avoided or an appropriate permit would be obtained from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
Biological Resource: Vegetation	Alternative 1: <i>Minor Impact – Not Significant</i> Alternative 2: <i>Minor Impact – Not Significant</i>	For Alternative 2, any vegetative debris generated during the construction activities would require authorization from FDEP for staging and disposal activities.
Biological Resource: Threatened and Endangered Species	Alternative 1: <i>No Impact</i> Alternative 2: <i>No Impact</i>	Not applicable.
Biological Resource: Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA)	Alternative 1: <i>No Impact</i> Alternative 2: <i>Minor Impact – Not Significant</i>	Not applicable.
Biological Resource: Magnusson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation Act (MSA)	Alternative 1: <i>No Impact</i> Alternative 2: <i>No Impact</i>	Not applicable.
Biological Resource: Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA)	Alternative 1: <i>No Impact</i> Alternate 2: <i>No Impact</i>	Not applicable.
Cultural Resource: Historic and Archaeological Resources	Alternative 1: <i>No Impact; No Historic Properties Affected</i>	Under Alternative 2, the conditions identified in Section 5.4 would be applied regarding National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) compliance with State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs).

Resource and Resource Type	Environmental Consequence	Environmental Protection Measures and Required Permits
	<i>Alternative 2: No Impact; No Historic Properties Affected</i>	
Socioeconomic Resource: Land Use	<i>Alternative 1: No Impact</i> <i>Alternative 2: No Impact</i>	Not applicable.
Socioeconomic Resource: Noise	<i>Alternative 1: No Impact</i> <i>Alternative 2: Minor Impact – Not Significant</i>	For Alternative 2, adherence to the Lee County noise ordinance would be followed during the construction and operation of the proposed group site. Noise generated from the construction activities described in Alternative 2 would be intermittent, heard only during daytime, and only for the duration of the project activities.
Socioeconomic Resource: Transportation and Traffic	<i>Alternative 1: No Impact</i> <i>Alternative 2: Minor Impact – Not Significant</i>	For Alternative 2, local and county law enforcement would be responsible for the safe flow and operation of traffic in and around the Deep Blue Group Site. All appropriate traffic signage and markings would be completed in accordance with local and state traffic law prior to the opening of the group site.
Socioeconomic Resource: Hazardous Materials/Wastes & Solid Waste	<i>Alternative 1: No Impact</i> <i>Alternative 2: Negligible Impact – Not Significant</i>	For Alternative 2, FEMA would require any hazardous materials discovered, generated, or used during implementation of the proposed project to be disposed of and handled in accordance with applicable state and federal regulations. Any permits, or authorizations, if required, would be obtained prior to handling and disposal.
Socioeconomic Resource: Occupational Health and Safety	<i>Alternative 1: No Impact</i> <i>Alternative 2: Negligible Impact – Not Significant</i>	For Alternative 2, occupational health and safety risks would be minimized as contractors would wear and use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and follow all applicable Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards and procedures. A health and safety plan would be developed and implemented prior to construction. Work areas would be clearly marked with appropriate signage and secured against unauthorized entry. Standard

Resource and Resource Type	Environmental Consequence	Environmental Protection Measures and Required Permits
		construction traffic control measures would be used to protect workers, residents, and the travelling public.
Socioeconomic Resource: Utilities and Public Services	Alternative 1: <i>No Impact</i> Alternative 2: <i>No Impact</i>	Not applicable.
Socioeconomic Resource: Environmental Justice (EO 12898), Equity, and Protection of Children	Alternative 1: <i>Moderate Adverse Impact – Significant</i> Alternative 2: <i>Moderate Beneficial Impact – Significant</i>	Not applicable.

5.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND POTENTIAL IMPACTS

5.1 PHYSICAL RESOURCES

5.1.1 GEOLOGY AND SOILS, AND FARMLAND PROTECTION POLICY ACT (FPPA)

The Florida Geological Survey Special Publication No. 59, dated 2022, provides insight into the geology of the region in which the proposed site is situated. Pine Island and the proposed group site reside within the Peninsular Coastal Lowlands Province. The oldest strata typically affecting the land surface in the Peninsular Coastal Lowlands Province are the Oligocene-Pliocene Hawthorn Group, including the Miocene-Pliocene Peace River Formation and the Oligocene-Pliocene undifferentiated Hawthorn Group, and Tertiary-Quaternary shelly sediments (Scott et al., 2001; Green et al., 1997; 1998; 2017a, b; Green, Evans, Williams, Kromhout, Bassett, and Hannon, 2012; Green, Evans, Williams, Kromhout, and Bassett, 2012). Surficial sediments in the province include Quaternary undifferentiated sediments and Holocene sediments in estuaries and on the barrier islands of the Gulf of Mexico coastline. The southern boundary of the Peninsular Coastal Lowlands Province is with the Caloosahatchee Valley Province. This boundary is based on a change in elevation descending to the valley of the Caloosahatchee River and on a change in direction of stream drainage toward the Caloosahatchee River rather than the Gulf of Mexico. The western boundary of the Peninsular Coastal Lowlands includes the barrier islands and extensive mangrove swamps along the lagoons and several large estuaries on the Gulf of Mexico coast.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey soil data, accessed March 2, 2023, soils underlying the proposed group site consists of 6.7% Myakka fine sand, 87.7% Immokalee sand,

0.5% Immokalee sand – Urban land complex, and 5.1% Punta fine sand – Urban land complex. All the soils classify as poorly drained, with 0 to 2 percent slopes, high surface runoff index, and parent material which consists of sandy marine deposits (Appendix C).

The NRCS soil map identifies the proposed project site as farmland of unique importance but not prime farmland. Unique farmland is land other than prime farmland that is used for the production of specific high value food and fiber crops. It has the special combination of soil quality, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high-quality or high yields of a specific crop when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Examples of such crops are citrus, tree nuts, olives, cranberries, fruit, and vegetables. The specific characteristics of unique farmland are the following:

- It is used for a specific high-value food or fiber crop;
- It has a moisture supply adequate for the specific crop (the supply is from stored moisture, precipitation, or a developed irrigation system); and,
- It combines favorable factors of soil quality, growing season, temperature, humidity, air drainage, elevation, aspect, or other conditions, such as nearness to market, favoring the growth of a specific food or fiber crop.

Prime farmland is defined as land consisting of the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops, and is available for these uses (Appendix C).

The purpose of the FPPA is to “minimize the extent to which Federal programs contribute to the unnecessary and irreversible conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses” (7 United States Code (USC) Part 4201(b)). For the purpose of FPPA, farmland includes prime farmland, unique farmland, and land of statewide or local importance. Farmland subject to FPPA requirements does not have to be currently used for cropland. It can be forest land, pastureland, cropland, or other land, but not water or urban built-up land.

Projects are subject to FPPA requirements if they may irreversibly convert farmland to non-agricultural use and are provided assistance by a federal agency or directly undertaken by a federal agency. While the NRCS is the agency responsible for ensuring the FPPA is implemented, the federal agency assisting with or undertaking the project must complete an impact rating form, AD-1006, to evaluate potential impacts of the project to farmland. The NRCS provides technical support to determine if the area of potential impacts of the project includes farmland; support with completing the impact rating form; and support with developing alternatives to the proposed project that minimize the irreversible conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses. The federal agency undertaking the project then determines whether and how to move forward, based upon an assessment of the project’s impacts. Projects are subject to FPPA requirements if they may

irreversibly convert farmland (directly or indirectly) to non-agricultural use. However, the FPPA excludes land already developed or irreversibly converted or land within US Census mapped urban areas.

Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the development of the proposed group site would not occur. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have no impact on geology or soils.

Alternative 2 – Develop the Deep Blue Group Site with MHUs (Preferred Alternative)

Under Alternative 2, the construction and operation of the proposed group site would have minimal soil disturbance as most of the construction would involve the placement of additional fill and geowebbing to facilitate the construction of the group site. The “Farmland of Unique Importance” on the proposed project site scored 42 on the farmland assessment form AD-1006 (Appendix C). This is below the “affect threshold” of 160. Adverse impacts to the farming potential of the site are not anticipated. When the group site is decommissioned, the property would be reverted to its previous state. Due to the limited nature and scope of the proposed project, no changes to local geology are anticipated. Based on the review conducted, Alternative 2 would have a negligible impact on soils. The impact would not be significant.

5.1.2 AIR QUALITY AND CLEAN AIR ACT (CAA)

The CAA requires the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to establish national ambient air quality standards for certain common and widespread pollutants based on standards established under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for the following criteria pollutants: carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide. Areas meeting the quality standards for the criteria pollutants are designated as being in attainment. Areas which do not meet the air quality standards for one of the criteria pollutants are designated as being in nonattainment for that standard. Lee County is currently classified as being in attainment for all criteria pollutants stipulated under NAAQS. Lee County has never recorded a year of being in nonattainment according to EPA’s Greenbook (<https://www.epa.gov/airquality/greenbook>), accessed on March 6, 2023. The threshold level for a significant impact to air quality is defined as a violation of an ambient air quality standard or regulatory threshold.

Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed group site would not be constructed and operated. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have no impact on air quality.

Alternative 2 – Develop the Deep Blue Group Site with MHUs (Preferred Alternative)

Under Alternative 2, the construction of the group site would generate short-term construction equipment exhaust emissions and short-term fugitive dust emissions. These air emissions would vary daily, depending on the level and type of work conducted and would be limited to the project construction period. Fugitive dust would be generated by construction vehicles and equipment operations on dirt surfaces and by wind action on stockpiled materials. Fugitive dust generated from the proposed action would consist primarily of nontoxic particulate matter and would be controlled at the sites using Best Management Practices (BMPs), including watering of exposed surfaces and enclosing or covering stockpiled material. Based on the review conducted, Alternative 2 would have a minor adverse impact on air quality. The impact would not be significant.

5.1.3 CLIMATE CHANGE

Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) are emitted by both natural processes and human activities, and their accumulation in the atmosphere regulates temperature. GHGs include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and other compounds. There are currently no established thresholds or standards for GHGs. However, according to current guidance from the CEQ, a quantitative analysis and disclosure of GHG emissions is not warranted unless the proposed action's direct annual emissions would be greater than 25,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent.

Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the site would not undergo the installation of utilities on the site, construction of gravel roadways and parking lots, placement of stone-base and concrete for trailer pads, residential parking, and associated appurtenance to facilitate up to 40 MHUs on the project site. Therefore, the No Action Alternative will have no impact on greenhouse gases.

Alternative 2 – Develop the Deep Blue Group Site with MHUs (Preferred Alternative)

Under Alternative 2, the construction of the group site would generate short-term construction equipment exhaust emissions. Pollutants that would be emitted from the internal combustion engines exhaust of construction vehicles, equipment, domiciles, and resident vehicles include certain criteria pollutants, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and certain GHGs. The EPA has estimated the average person produces approximately 9.41 metric tons (20,750 pounds) of carbon a year. Factors such as how much the individual drives, their car's mileage-per-gallon, the home's average temperature, energy sources, and waste all contribute to variability of this estimate. With the estimated number of 100 occupants (averaging 2.5 occupants per MHU), the group site is expected to produce approximately 941 metric tons of carbon annually which would not exceed the 25,000 metric ton threshold. Annual construction and residential emissions are expected to be

less than the federal de minimis thresholds for criteria pollutants and VOCs. Construction-related GHG emission impacts are expected to be negligible in terms of overall quantity and within the range expected for construction and operation of a group site of this scale. The impacts would not be significant.

5.2 WATER RESOURCES

5.2.1 CLEAN WATER ACT (CWA) AND SURFACE WATER

The CWA establishes the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) and regulating quality standards for surface waters. Section 404 of the CWA establishes a program to regulate the discharge of dredged or fill material into WOTUS, including wetlands. Activities in WOTUS regulated under this program include fill for development, water resource projects (such as dams and levees), infrastructure development (such as highways and airports) and mining projects. Section 401 of the CWA requires certification of all Federal licenses and permits in which there is a “discharge of fill material into navigable waters.” The certification process is used to determine whether an activity, as described in the Federal license or permit, would impact established site-specific water quality standards. A water quality certification from the issuing state, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), is required prior to the issuance of the relevant Federal license or permit. Section 404 requires a permit before dredged or fill material may be discharged into WOTUS, unless the activity is exempt from Section 404 regulation (e.g., certain farming and forestry activities). The most common Federal license or permit requiring certification is the USACE CWA Section 404 permit.

On the effective date of December 22, 2020, the FDEP assumed regulatory authority of certain WOTUS within the State of Florida. The waters USACE continues to regulate are referred to as “retained waters.” Pursuant to 404(g) of the CWA, USACE will retain permitting authority under Section 404 of the CWA for those waters which are presently used, or are susceptible to use, in their natural condition or by reasonable improvement as a means to transport interstate or foreign commerce shoreward to their ordinary high water mark, including all waters which are subject to the ebb and flow of the tide shoreward to their mean high water mark, including wetlands adjacent thereto. Therefore, USACE will retain responsibility for permitting the discharge of dredged or fill material in:

- Waters identified in USACE’s Retained Waters List. A list of USACE Retained Waters can be found at: (<https://www.saj.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory/>);
- All waters subject to the ebb and flow of the tide shoreward to their mean high-water mark that are not specifically listed in the Retained Waters List;

- Wetlands adjacent to those waters identified above landward to the administrative boundary (the administrative boundary demarcating the adjacent wetlands over which jurisdiction is retained by USACE is a 300-foot guideline established from the ordinary high-water mark or mean high tide line of the retained water); and,
- Those waters of the United States within “Indian Country.”

In the case of a project that involves discharges of dredged or fill material both waterward and landward of the 300-foot guideline, USACE will retain jurisdiction to the landward boundary of the project for the purposes of that project only. All waters of the United States not retained by USACE will be assumed by FDEP as part of its State 404 Program. Projects in assumed waters will be processed by FDEP pursuant to the State 404 Program.

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) was established under Section 402 of the CWA and regulates wastewater discharges from point sources. NPDES regulations require construction sites resulting in greater than one acre of disturbance obtain a permit from the EPA, or the corresponding state agency where the permitting role has been assumed by the state. In Florida, an NPDES stormwater construction permit is required from the FDEP for any proposed project which would disturb at least one or more acres of land and those discharging stormwater to surface waters of the state. As part of an NPDES permit, the proponent of a project is required to prepare and implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), which outlines BMPs and engineering controls to be used to prevent and minimize erosion, sedimentation, and pollution during construction.

Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no construction activities would be involved. Therefore, there would be no impacts to surface waters.

Alternative 2 – Develop Deep Blue Group Site with MHUs (Preferred Alternative)

Under Alternative 2, impacts to water quality are expected to be minor. Appropriate BMPs would be implemented during site development to minimize sediment migration from the site into nearby surface water bodies. Surface water runoff would be mitigated by siltation controls such as silt fencing around the construction site to minimize the erosion and runoff of materials into adjacent wetland areas or waterways. Any disturbed soil would be protected with seed and straw or sod after construction to decrease the amount of soil eroded by rainfall and runoff. If fill material is stored on site, the contractor would provide appropriate cover to prevent runoff. To control storm water runoff, the contractor would be required to design drainage features so surface water flow would not cause nuisance flooding during heavy rainfall events. The drainage system would be required to meet all applicable local and county requirements. Additionally, the contractor would

obtain 401 Water Quality Certification, SWPPP, and NPDES permits or self-certifications prior to the commencement of any work. These actions are designed to prevent any degradation of water quality as a result of silt-laden runoff from the construction site. Based on the review conducted, Alternative 2 would have minor impacts on surface waters. The impacts would not be significant.

5.2.2 FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT

Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management (EO 11988), as implemented in 44 CFR Part 9, requires federal agencies to “avoid to the extent possible the long and short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains and to avoid direct or indirect support of floodplain development wherever there is a practicable alternative.” The 100-year floodplain is the area covered by water in the event of a 100-year flood, which is a flood that has a 1% annual chance of being equaled or exceeded in magnitude in any given year. The 500-year floodplain is the area covered by water in the event of a 500-year flood, which is a flood that has a 0.2% annual chance of being equaled or exceeded in magnitude in any given year. The 100- and 500-year floodplains are mapped on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs).

Based on the current FEMA FIRM for the area of the proposed Deep Blue Group Site, the project is located within the 1% chance floodplain (Appendix D), which is defined as a moderate to high-risk area within the floodplain.

Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the site would not undergo the installation of utilities on the site, construction of gravel roadways and parking lots, placement of stone-base and concrete for pads, residential parking, and associated appurtenance to facilitate up to 40 MHUs on the project site. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have no impact on the floodplain.

Alternative 2 – Develop the Deep Blue Group Site with MHUs (Preferred Alternative)

The proposed action would result in the construction of gravel roadway, placement of stone-base and concrete for pads, residential parking, and associated appurtenance to facilitate up to 40 MHUs on the project site within the floodplain. Other group site locations outside of the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) were considered but were deemed infeasible for various reasons including proximity to core populations in need of housing assistance; property size limitations; access to utilities; and willingness of landowners to sign a lease agreement with FEMA.

The eight-step decision making process, as described in 44 CFR Part 9 for projects within or with the potential to impact a floodplain, was completed (Appendix D). The proposed action would result in the addition of approximately nine acres of impervious surfaces. Additionally, the project would implement National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) mitigation measures outlined in NFIP

technical bulletins, to reduce flood loss risk. These mitigation measures include open column bases, MHUs elevated above BFE plus one foot of freeboard, as well as permeable gravel roadways to reduce the total amount of impervious surface. FEMA would coordinate with the local Floodplain Administrator to ensure the proposed project complies with the no adverse impact principle of floodplain management. Based on the review conducted, Alternative 2 would have minor adverse impacts on the floodplain. The impacts would not be significant.

5.2.3 PROTECTION OF WETLANDS (EO 11990) AND WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS ACT (WSRA)

Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands (EO 11990), requires federal agencies to avoid, to the extent possible, the long- and short-term adverse impacts associated with the destruction or modification of wetlands, and to avoid direct or indirect support of new construction in wetlands wherever there is a practicable alternative.

Section 404 of the CWA regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into WOTUS, including wetlands. Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act (RHA) grants the USACE permitting jurisdiction for structures or works in or affecting navigable WOTUS. Florida's Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) program regulates dredging and filling in wetlands and surface waters, and activities in uplands which generate stormwater runoff or otherwise alter surface water flows.

The Deep Blue Group Site project area resides on the interior of Pine Island. The extent of historical wetlands is poorly understood due to the fact limited information regarding the existence of wetlands can be observed from historical aerial imagery (Appendix J) and satellite photography. However, given the low elevation, and its placement on a barrier island, it is reasonable to assume wetlands existed throughout the barrier island including within the proposed project boundary. Presently the proposed Deep Blue Group Site would have moderate disturbance associated with urban development including but not limited to: site clearing, site drainage by way of ditching, regularly site maintenance, invasive plant species, and planned future development.

South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) was recently in the process of evaluating an ERP, Application No. 221103-36486, with a final action date of March 1, 2023. No formal wetland delineation concurrence has been completed by either the SFWMD or the USACE. Site visits conducted by the FEMA Logistics contractor and USACE personnel during the evaluations of the draft EA have determined the presence of three potential wetlands within the project site (Appendix A). The three wetlands on-site are small, potentially isolated, depressional areas with hydric herbaceous vegetation, mucky soil, and soil saturation within 24 inches of the surface. Secondary indicators were observed including water-stained leaves and algal matting.

The purpose of the WSRA of 1968 (PL 90 to 542; 16 USC 1271 to 1287) is to preserve certain rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the

enjoyment of present and future generations through the creation of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (NWSRS). River segments are designated part of the system by Congress or, if certain requirements are met, the Secretary of the Interior. Each designated river or segment is administered by a federal or state agency, tribe, or local government. The United States Forest Service (USFS), National Park Service (NPS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) are the four primary federal agencies with responsibility for the NWSRS. There are two WSRs located in Florida, the Wekiva River and Loxahatchee River, neither of which are located in the vicinity of the proposed group site location.

Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no short- or long-term impacts to water resources would occur. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have no impact on wetlands.

Alternative 2 – Develop the Deep Blue Group Site with MHUs (Preferred Alternative)

Under Alternative 2, no short- or long-term impacts to water resources would be expected. According to the National Wild and Scenic River Program website (<https://www.rivers.gov/>), accessed on March 6, 2023, no designated Wild and Scenic Rivers exist within the vicinity of the proposed action. According to the USFWS National Wetlands Inventory Map (<https://fws.gov/wetlands/>), accessed March 6, 2023, no designated wetlands were identified within the proposed group site area. Construction of the Deep Blue Group Site would be temporary in nature and would avoid all potential wetland areas identified, including a 25-foot buffer. Based on field observations and information provided within the National Wetlands Inventory map, Alternative 2 would have a negligible impact to wetland resources (Appendix E). The impacts would not be significant.

5.2.4 COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT ACT (CZMA) and COASTAL BARRIER RESOURCES ACT (CBRA)

The CZMA provides for the management of the nation’s coastal resources. The CZMA defines the coastal zones where development must be managed to protect areas of natural resources unique to coastal regions. States are required to define the area that will comprise coastal zone and develop management plans that will protect these unique resources through enforceable policies of state Coastal Zone Management (CZM) programs. As defined in the Act, the coastal zone includes coastal waters extending to the outer limit of state submerged land title and ownership, adjacent shorelines, and land extending inward to the extent necessary to control shorelines. Federal as well as local actions must be determined to be consistent with the CZM plans and policies before they can proceed.

The Florida Coastal Management Program (FCMP) was approved by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in 1981 and is codified in Chapter 380, Part II, F.S. The state of Florida's coastal zone includes the area encompassed by the state's 67 counties and its territorial seas. The FCMP consists of a network of 24 Florida Statutes administered by eight state agencies and five water management districts. This framework allows the state to make integrated, balanced decisions that ensure the wise use and protection of the state's water, property, cultural, historic and biological resources; protect public health; minimize the state's vulnerability to coastal hazards; ensure orderly, managed growth; protect the state's transportation system; and sustain a vital economy.

Federal consistency reviews are integrated into other review processes conducted by the state depending on the type of federal action being proposed. The Florida State Clearinghouse, administered by the FDEP Office of Intergovernmental Programs, is the primary contact for receipt of consistency evaluations from federal agencies.

The CBRA of 1982 and subsequent amendments are designed to address problems caused by coastal barrier development by restricting most Federal expenditures and financial assistance that tend to encourage such development. Three important goals of CBRA are to minimize loss of human life by discouraging development in high-risk areas, reduce wasteful expenditure of federal resources, and protect the natural resources associated with coastal barriers. The Coastal Barrier Improvement Act of 1990 (CBIA) reauthorized the CBRA and added new units. The CBIA, an addition to the CBRA, designated a new category of lands known as “otherwise protected areas” (OPAs). OPAs are based on areas established under federal, state, or local law, or held by a qualified organization, primarily for wildlife refuge, sanctuary, recreational, or natural resource conservation purposes.

Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no short- or long-term impacts to water resources would occur. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have no impact on coastal resources.

Alternative 2 – Develop the Deep Blue Group Site with MHUs (Preferred Alternative)

Under Alternative 2, the construction of the Deep Blue Group Site would not be located within an area subject to CBRA and is not along the coast per USFWS Coastal Barrier Resources System Mapper (<https://fwsprimary.wim.usgs.gov/CBRSMapper-v2/>), accessed on March 6, 2023. Therefore, there would be no impact to coastal resources. According to the State of Florida's Coastal Management Program, all 67 counties within the state reside within a coastal management zone. All federal activities in the state obtain CZM consistency through the FCMP by obtaining all appropriate state permits prior to construction. Therefore, Alternative 2 would have negligible impacts on coastal resources. These impacts would not be significant.

5.2.5 DRINKING WATER AND GROUNDWATER

The Safe Water Drinking Act, passed in 1974, authorizes the EPA to set national health-based standards for drinking water to protect against both naturally occurring and man-made contaminants that may be found in drinking water. According to the EPA's Map of Sole Source Aquifer Locations (<https://www.epa.gov/dwssa/map-sole-source-aquifer-locations>), Lee County, Florida is not located within an aquifer.

The proposed group site is in the low-density urban municipality of St. James City, Florida situated on Pine Island. Documented occurrences of groundwater contamination near the proposed project site were assessed via FDEP's MapDirect NEXUS database, an alternative interface for FDEP's OCULUS archival database. FDEP's OCULUS database houses permits and other publicly available documents. There are currently four facilities in various stages of contamination related compliance, remediation, and monitoring. According to publicly available data none of these sites have reported groundwater contamination outside the immediate vicinity of the contaminated properties. These sites are further discussed in section 5.5.4.

Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no short- or long-term impacts to drinking water or groundwater would occur. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have no impacts on current drinking water or groundwater.

Alternative 2 – Develop the Deep Blue Group Site with MHUs (Preferred Alternative)

Under Alternative 2, the construction of the Deep Blue Group Site would not require dewatering and is not anticipated to have an impact on local groundwater quality or flow. The Deep Blue Group Site would not utilize groundwater for the site's water supply. The group site would include the installation of utilities, tied-in with existing Pine Island utilities, located adjacent to the proposed site.

There is not an anticipated need to pump groundwater at the Deep Blue Group Site, therefore no known impact to the water table or aquifer is anticipated. Based on a review of well data provided by FDEP through the MapDirect database, there are no public water supply wells, well fields, or other wells that pump large quantities of water from an aquifer near the project site. With the utilization of existing utilities, the proposed site does not appear to be subject to rapid water withdrawal problems that would change the depth or character of the water table or aquifer. Hazardous materials used and hazardous wastes generated during construction would be managed in accordance with applicable environmental compliance regulations to prevent releases to groundwater. Based on the review conducted, Alternative 2 would have negligible impacts on groundwater. The impacts would not be significant.

5.3 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

5.3.1 FISH AND WILDLIFE

Biological resources include native or naturalized plants and animals and their habitats (e.g. wetlands, forests, and grasslands). This draft EA does not cover adverse impacts to species or habitats of concern over relatively large areas, or if disturbances cause reductions in population size or distribution. FEMA uses potential physical impacts such as habitat loss, noise, and impacts to water quality to assess the effects of the action alternatives on biological resources.

The proposed group site is undeveloped, surrounded by single family residential dwellings, a wastewater treatment facility, and other roadways. No comprehensive wildlife surveys have been conducted on the proposed site. The site most likely supports minimal wildlife habitat and use in its current state. Wildlife is likely limited to common and nuisance species including, but not limited to, raccoons, bats, opossums, armadillos, foxes, snakes, squirrels, iguanas, bobcats, lizards, coyotes, skunks, rats, raptors, various passerines, and mice. Based on the habitat conditions and species data from the Florida Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), the species with the highest likelihood to occur on this site include the gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*) and the Florida burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*). The site currently does not contain any aquatic resources of significance.

Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the site would not undergo the installation of utilities on the site, construction of gravel roadways and parking lots, placement of stone-base and concrete for pads, residential parking, and associated appurtenance to facilitate up to 40 MHUs on the project site. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have no impacts on fish and wildlife.

Alternative 2 – Develop the Deep Blue Group Site with MHUs (Preferred Alternative)

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, the site would undergo the installation of utilities on the site, construction of gravel roadways and parking lots, placement of stone-base and concrete for trailer pads, residential parking, and associated appurtenance to facilitate up to 40 MHUs. Based on the habitat conditions and species data from the FWC, the species with the highest likelihood to occur on this site include the gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*) and Florida burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*). The gopher tortoise and Florida burrowing owl are both state-designated threatened species and not federally listed under the ESA. To protect gopher tortoises, appropriate permits would be obtained, if required, in the event a tortoise or burrow is found within the proposed project area and if the burrows cannot be permanently avoided by at least 25 feet or more. To protect Florida burrowing owls, appropriate permits would be obtained, if required, in the event a burrowing owl or burrow is found within the proposed project area and if the burrows cannot be

avoided by 33 feet or more. Many common wildlife species would be driven away from the group site during construction and day to day operations; however, the occurrence of nuisance species is expected to increase modestly with the presence of food and solid waste produced by the occupants of the group site. This increase in activity is expected to be temporary and is anticipated to return to previous conditions once the group site is demobilized. Based on the review conducted, Alternative 2 would have a minor adverse impact on wildlife. The impact would not be significant.

5.3.2 VEGETATION

The proposed group site, as described in previous sections, has been highly disturbed in recent years. Based on aerial imagery, the site appears previously disturbed, existing on the urban interface, and comprised of sparsely scattered pine trees (*Pinus elliottii*) throughout with a large Melaleuca (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*) stand along the northeastern periphery. The remainder of the site is interspersed with unimproved pasture, with several small depressional areas displaying characteristics of emergent wetlands.

Presently, the herbaceous areas of the site appear to be regularly maintained and can be categorized as undeveloped land in urban areas. The site exhibits minimal opportunistic herbaceous vegetation with some remnant of mesic pine arboreal species as well as exotics, such as Melaleuca and Brazilian peppertree, sparsely located along the periphery.

Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the site would not undergo the installation of utilities on the site, construction of gravel roadways and parking lots, placement of stone-base and concrete for pads, residential parking, and associated appurtenance to facilitate up to 40 MHUs on the project site. If the area remains unmaintained, it could result in the introduction and colonization of invasive plant species, which typically out-compete native species in disturbed habitats. The No Action Alternative could potentially result in minor long-term adverse impacts in those areas. The impacts would not be significant.

Alternative 2 – Develop the Deep Blue Group Site with MHUs (Preferred Alternative)

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, the site would undergo the installation of utilities on the site, construction of gravel roadways and parking lots, placement of stone-base and concrete for trailer pads, residential parking, and associated appurtenance to facilitate up to 40 MHUs. The natural revegetation of the site would be severely impeded by the construction of the group site and associated daily operation. However, the impact is expected to be temporary, and the site would be allowed to return to its previous conditions once the group site is decommissioned. Based on the review conducted, Alternative 2 would have minor adverse impacts on vegetation. The impacts would not be significant.

5.3.3 THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 establishes a federal program to conserve, protect and restore threatened and endangered plants and animals and their habitats. ESA specifically charges federal agencies with the responsibility of using their authority to conserve threatened and endangered species. All federal agencies must ensure any action they authorize, fund, or carry out is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of an endangered or threatened species or result in the destruction of critical habitat for these species.

The proposed project site parcel was surveyed on February 2, 2023, for the presence of any federal listed threatened or endangered species. No fauna was observed on the site, although bird species were observed on adjacent properties.

Based on the habitat conditions and species data from the USFWS, the site resides within the USFWS consultation areas of the following species: Florida Bonneted Bat (*Eumops floridanus*), Florida Scrub Jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*), Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*), American Crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*), and the Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*). There is no designated critical habitat within the proposed project site.

Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed group site would not be constructed and operated. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have no impact on threatened and endangered species or critical habitat.

Alternative 2 – Develop the Deep Blue Group Site with MHUs (Preferred Alternative)

According to the USFWS Information for Planning and Conservation (IPaC) website (<https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/>), accessed March 6, 2023, the proposed group site location associated with Alternative 2 was reviewed for a list of threatened and endangered species in the project area. There are 18 federally listed species and 14 migratory bird species that occur within Lee County; however, the proposed group site location does not contain suitable habitat for any of the listed species. Per the USFWS Critical Habitat online mapper (<http://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/table/critical-habitat.html>), accessed March 6, 2023, no designated critical habitats are located within the proposed project area.

The proposed group site is within the consultation area of the following federally species: Florida Bonneted Bat (*Eumops floridanus*), Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*), Eastern Indigo Snake (*Drymarchon corais couperi*), Florida Scrub Jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*), American Crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*), and Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*). A No Effect determination has

been made for these species, therefore, consultation with USFWS is not necessary. The effect determination rationales for the above listed species are as follows:

- Florida Bonneted Bat (*Eumops floridanus*): Based on the USFWS Consultation Key for the Florida Bonneted Bat (FBB); 04EF2000-2014-I-0320-R001, dated October 22, 2019.
 - 1a. Proposed project or land use change is partially or wholly within the Consultation Area; 2. No Potential FBB roosting habitat exists within the project area; 13. FBB foraging habitat exists within the project area and foraging habitat will not be affected;
 - Determination: No Effect. The programmatic consultation key is attached to this EA (Appendix F).
- Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*): Based on the USFWS Consultation Key for the Wood Stork for South Florida, 41420-2007-FA-1494, dated May 18, 2010.
 - Project does not affect suitable foraging habitat
 - Determination: No Effect. The programmatic consultation key is attached to this EA (Appendix F).
- Eastern Indigo Snake (*Drymarchon corais couperi*) Based on the USFWS Consultation Key for the Eastern Indigo Snake for South Florida, 41420-2009-I-0467-R001, dated August 1, 2017.
 - Project does not affect suitable habitat
 - Determination: No Effect. The programmatic consultation key is attached to this EA (Appendix F).
- Florida Scrub Jay (*Aplelocoma coerulescens*): There is no Florida Scrub Jay critical habitat on the site according to the Corps Resources at Risk (RAR) program. Therefore, based on the Standard Local Operating Procedures of Endangered Species (SLOPES) and other information as cited above, the project would not jeopardize the continued existence of this species or adversely modify any critical habitat for the Scrub Jay. Therefore, a No Effect determination for the Scrub Jay is appropriate. No further consultation is necessary.
- American Crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*): There is no American Crocodile Critical habitat on the site according to the Corps RAR program. Therefore, based on the SLOPES and other information as cited above, the project would not jeopardize the continued existence of this species or adversely modify any critical habitat for the American Crocodile. Therefore, a No Effect determination for the American Crocodile is appropriate. No further consultation is necessary.
- Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*): There is no Piping Plover critical habitat on the site according to the Corps RAR program. Therefore, based on the SLOPES and other information as cited above, the project would not jeopardize the continued existence of this species or adversely modify any critical habitat for the Piping Plover. Therefore, a No

Effect determination for the Piping Plover is appropriate. No further consultation is necessary.

Based on the scope of work and lack of suitable habitat at the proposed site, FEMA has made the determination the proposed Deep Blue Group Site would have no effect to federally listed species and would not adversely modify critical habitat. Based on the review conducted, Alternative 2 would have no impacts on threatened and endangered species or critical habitat.

5.3.4 MIGRATORY BIRD TREATY ACT (MBTA)

The MBTA of 1918 provides a program for the conservation of migratory birds that fly through lands of the United States. The lead federal agency for implementing the MBTA is the USFWS. The law makes it illegal for anyone to “take” (meaning to pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or attempt to pursue), attempt to take, capture, or kill, possess, offer for sale, sell, offer to barter, barter, offer to purchase, purchase, deliver for shipment, ship, export, import, cause to be shipped, exported, or imported, deliver for transportation, transport or cause to be transported, carry or cause to be carried, or receive for shipment, transportation, carriage, or export, any migratory bird, any part, nest, or egg of any such bird, or any product, whether or not manufactured, which consists, or is composed in whole or part, of any such bird or any part, nest, or eggs.

The entire state of Florida is considered a flyway zone for migratory birds. According to the USFWS IPaC database, accessed on March 6, 2023, 14 migratory bird species were identified as being potentially present within the project area, and 12 of the species have a designated breeding season which could occur within the project vicinity.

Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative

Alternative 1 would not involve any construction activities. Therefore, no potential effects or a “take” is anticipated. There will be no destruction or adverse modification of the surrounding habitat. The No Action Alternative would have no impact on migratory birds or associated habitat.

Alternative 2 – Develop the Deep Blue Group Site with MHUs (Preferred Alternative)

Under Alternative 2, minor short-term impacts to species within the project area could potentially occur due to construction activities. The project area is not ideal nesting habitat due to previously authorized fill and site clearing; is not optimal for foraging; and is not located within a designated critical habitat. Therefore, the take of a migratory bird species is not anticipated with this alternative. Alternative 2 may result in short-term minor impacts to migratory birds or their associated habitat. The impacts would not be significant.

5.3.5 MAGNUSON-STEVENSON FISHERY CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT ACT (MSA)

The MSA is the primary law governing marine fisheries management in U.S. federal waters and is meant to foster long-term biological and economic sustainability of our nation's marine fisheries. Key objectives of the MSA are to prevent overfishing, rebuild overfished stocks, increase long-term economic and social benefits, and ensure a safe and sustainable supply of seafood. The NOAA Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Mapper online tool can be used to determine designated EFH for species. No EFH are expected to be impacted by any of the proposed project alternatives as the work would be completed outside of the water. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) - Fish and Wildlife Research Institute hardbottom habitat data can also be used to determine the nearest hardbottom habitats from a project location, but none of the project areas are located near an estuarine or marine wetland. Additionally, no salt marshes or seagrass habitats are located near the project areas.

Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative

Alternative 1 would not involve any construction activities; further, there are no waterbodies at or near the project location. Therefore, there would be no impact on fisheries or breeding habitat.

Alternative 2 – Develop the Deep Blue Group Site with MHUs (Preferred Alternative)

The project area for Alternative 2 is not located in or near any waterbodies and is not near or in EFH; therefore, there would be no impact on fisheries or breeding habitat.

5.3.6 BALD AND GOLDEN EAGLE PROTECTION ACT (BGEPA)

The BGEPA (16 USC 668 to 668c), enacted in 1940, prohibits anyone, without a permit issued by the Secretary of the Interior, from "taking" bald and golden eagles, including their parts, nests, or eggs. Like the MBTA, the law makes it illegal for anyone to "take" (meaning to pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or attempt to pursue), possess, import, export, transport, sell, purchase, barter, or offer for sale, purchase, or barter, any migratory bird, or their parts, feathers, nests, or eggs.

According to the FWC Historical Bald Eagle Nesting Areas mapper (<https://geodata.myfwc.com/datasets/myfwc::eagle-nesting/about>) and the Audubon Florida EagleWatch Nest Application (<https://cbop.audubon.org/conservation/about-eaglewatch-program>), accessed on March 6, 2023, no documented bald eagle nests are located within or adjacent to the project area. The general nesting season for bald eagles in the southeast is from approximately October 1 to May 15. Golden eagles inhabit tundra, grasslands, forested and woodland-brushlands, and arid deserts. They avoid nesting in urban habitat. Due to the species

habitat being inconsistent with the habitat of the project location, the presence of a golden eagle is unlikely to occur within the project area.

Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative

Alternative 1 would not involve any construction activities, therefore there would be no impact to bald or golden eagles.

Alternative 2 – Develop the Deep Blue Group Site with MHUs (Preferred Alternative)

The Alternative 2 project area is not within the vicinity of a known bald eagle nest nor is the area suitable for golden eagle habitat. No impact to these species or associated habitat is anticipated.

5.4 CULTURAL RESOURCES

5.4.1 HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The consideration of impacts to historic and cultural resources is mandated under Section 101(b)(4) of the NEPA. Consideration of effects to historic properties as a result of Federal Undertakings is also mandated by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) as implemented by 36 CFR Part 800. In addition, providing Direct Temporary Housing Assistance in the form of constructing Group Sites meets the definition of a Federal Undertaking pursuant to Title 36 CFR Part 800. Accordingly, FEMA is required to comply with Section 106 of the NHPA.

Cultural resources include historic architectural properties (including buildings, structures, and objects), prehistoric and archaeological sites, historic districts, designed landscapes, and traditional cultural properties. The NHPA created the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and criteria to determine if cultural resources are eligible for listing in the NRHP. The NHPA defines historic properties as any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object that is listed in, or eligible for listing in, the NRHP (36 CFR 800.16). When NRHP-eligible properties are present, federal agencies must assess the effect of the Federal Undertaking on them and consider ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential adverse effects. The area of potential effect (APE) for cultural resources is limited to the area within which all construction and ground-disturbing activities would be confined and the viewshed (or the visual impact) of the proposed project.

FEMA is initiating Section 106 review for the Federal Undertaking in accordance with the Programmatic Agreement among FEMA, the Florida State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM), and participating Tribes, executed on September 10, 2014, and the second Duration Amendment, effective September 9, 2022, as amended (Agreement).

The threshold level for significant impacts to cultural resources under NHPA would be those impacts that adversely affect the historic integrity of any historic property that is eligible for or listed in the NRHP under Section 106 or has been identified by a federally recognized tribe as a sacred site or traditional cultural property.

Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no Federal Undertaking; therefore, the No Action Alternative would have no impact on historic properties.

Alternative 2 – Develop the Deep Blue Group Site with MHUs (Preferred Alternative)

Under Alternative 2, FEMA has determined that the APE for the proposed Federal Undertaking includes the immediate viewshed around the proposed group site and the areas of ground disturbance within the perimeter of the proposed site necessary for the preparation of the individual MHU pads, including underground utilities, access routes, parking locations, lighting, and perimeter fencing.

During the week of March 21, 2023, FEMA referenced the Florida State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Cultural Resources ArcGIS database, the NRHP and associated site files, photos, maps, and FEMA's internal files in order to identify historic properties. The APE is neither within any districts listed in or that have been previously determined eligible for listing in the NRHP, nor are there any recorded, eligible archaeological sites within or near the boundaries of the proposed site. Additionally, site and soil characteristics and previous archaeological surveys suggest a medium to high potential for the presence of any eligible, unrecorded archaeological sites within the boundaries of the proposed group site.

A FEMA Historic Preservation Specialist reviewed the area for the proposed group site and determined the site has a low probability of having a historic or prehistoric site within the proposed area. The proposed Deep Blue Group Site location has historically been used as an agricultural field. However, because the parcel had never been surveyed, a Phase I Cultural Resource Assessment Survey (CRAS) of the property was completed. The CRAS determined there were no known archaeological sites or artifacts in the proposed area and FEMA determined there are no historic properties as defined in 36 CFR 800.16(l) within the APE. Due to the temporary nature of the proposed housing site and the previous archaeological investigations within the APE, the Undertaking has limited potential to affect any undocumented properties. FEMA consulted with SHPO on April 3, 2023 and received a concurrence of No Historic Properties Affected on April 27, 2023 (Appendix G). Per the Programmatic Agreement, FEMA consulted with the following six federally recognized tribes: Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town of the Creek Nation, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, Muscogee Creek Nation, Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Seminole Tribe of Florida, and the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma. FEMA received concurrence of No

Historic Properties Affected from the Muscogee Creek Nation and the Seminole Tribe of Florida on April 12, 2023, with the following condition:

- If human remains or intact archaeological features or deposits (e.g. arrowheads, pottery, glass, metal, etc.) are uncovered, work in the vicinity of the discovery will stop immediately and all reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm to the finds will be taken. The FEMA Logistics contractor will ensure that archaeological discoveries are secured in place, that access to the sensitive area is restricted, and that all reasonable measures are taken to avoid further disturbance of the discoveries. The FEMA Logistics contractor will provide immediate notice of such discoveries to the applicant. The FEMA Logistics shall contact the Florida Division of Historic Resources and FEMA within 24 hours of the discovery. Work in the vicinity of the discovery may not resume until FEMA has completed consultation with SHPO, Tribes, and other consulting parties as necessary. In the event that unmarked human remains are encountered during permitted activities; all work shall stop immediately and the proper authorities notified in accordance with Florida Statutes, Section 872.05.

No other responses were received from the other federally recognized tribes and their concurrence is assumed. The proposed MHUs are not intended to be a permanent construction; these units would be installed due to a demand for housing among the survivors of Hurricane Ian and would be only permitted for 18 months. After 18 months, a recovery plan would be enacted and the units would be removed, leading to no permanent impacts on the historic integrity for any nearby properties. Based on the analysis conducted, Alternative 2 would have no impacts on historic properties.

5.5 SOCIOECONOMIC RESOURCES

5.5.1 LAND USE

Local regulatory bodies, such as municipalities or counties, utilize zoning as a planning tool for controlling and regulating the function of real estate markets within their jurisdiction. This is typically achieved by dividing land into sections within a jurisdiction and limiting land uses based on categories dictated by a regulatory body. Examples of these categories include residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, etc. Through zoning, local regulatory authorities and city planners can dictate the particular use, layout, and permitting of cities to control present use and plan future development. In most cases, the development of comprehensive plans through a public participation process, as approved by publicly elected officials, will capture local values and attitudes of planning and future development. Zoning ordinances and land use regulations vary throughout the United States.

According to Lee County Zoning Find My Zone Web Portal (<https://www.leegov.com/dcd/zoning>), accessed on March 6, 2023, the current parcel where the proposed action is to occur is zoned for “commercial”. The project area is bordered by existing “residential” zones to the west and east and “commercial” zones to the north and south.

Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no disruption or displacement of an existing or planned land use is anticipated. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have no impact on land use.

Alternative 2 – Develop the Deep Blue Group Site with MHUs (Preferred Alternative)

Under Alternative 2, the development of the Deep Blue Group Site would necessitate coordination with Lee County to change the zoning of the parcel, permanently or temporarily, to “residential” to comply with current Lee County land use codes. No further disruption or displacement of an existing or planned land use is anticipated. Alternative 2 would have no impact on Lee County zoning.

5.5.2 NOISE

The Noise Control Act was enacted in 1972 (P.L. 92-574). Inadequately controlled noise presents a growing danger to the health and welfare of the nation's population. The major sources of noise include transportation vehicles and equipment; machinery; appliances; and other products in commerce, climate, or recreation. Sounds disrupting normal activities or otherwise diminishing the quality of the environment are designated as noise. Noise can be stationary or transient, intermittent or continuous.

Noise in this review is generally categorized as excessive or unwanted sound. The effects of noise on humans include, but are not limited to, annoyance, sleep disturbance, and adverse health effects. High noise can interfere with animal communication, reproduction, identifying potential prey or food sources, and induce fear, forcing species to abandon their habitat. In general, animals and humans are stressed by excessively noisy environments.

Noise originating in the county is regulated by Lee County Noise Control Ordinance (Section Six of Lee County Ordinance 14-18, effective September 2, 2014, amended Lee County Ordinance 22-10, effective April 19, 2022). Sound levels are measure in decibels (dBA). Per this ordinance, noise in residentially zoned areas cannot exceed 66 dBA between the hours of 0700 and 2200. The ordinance also stipulates “no person shall operate or permit to be operated any power-driven construction equipment without a muffler or other noise-reduction device at least as effective as that recommended by the manufacturer or provided as original equipment unless the sound level emitted by the equipment is less than the sound level limit for the applicable land use category, as

measured from at or within the real property line of the receiving land.” Construction equipment that must be operated near a residential area on a 24 hour-per-day basis (i.e., pumps, well tips, generators, etc.) will be shielded by a barrier to reduce the noise during the hours of 1800 to 0700, unless the unshielded noise level is less than 55 dBA or 60 dBC, as measured from at or within the real property line of any residential receiving land. Based on the data presented in the EPA publication, “Noise from Construction Equipment and Operations, Building Equipment, and Home Appliances” (EPA, 1971), the main phases of outdoor construction typically generate noise levels that range from 78 dBA to 89 dBA, approximately 50 feet from the construction site. Noise Levels are estimated to decrease by approximately 6 dBA with every doubling of distance from a noise source.

Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the site would not undergo the installation of utilities on the site, construction of gravel roadways and parking lots, placement of stone-base and concrete for trailer pads, residential parking, and associated appurtenance to facilitate up to 40 MHUs. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have no impact on noise.

Alternative 2 – Develop the Deep Blue Group Site with MHUs (Preferred Alternative)

Under Alternative 2, the construction of the group site would generate short-term construction equipment noise, and the long-term noise associated with daily activities of group site residents. A temporary increase of ambient noise levels in and around the construction of the group site is expected. The nearest noise-sensitive receptors are residential homes north of the project site. Based on the construction equipment that would be used, such as excavators and dump trucks, the approximate noise is anticipated to be 85 dBA at a reference distance of 50 feet from the equipment ((FHWA) Reports Inventory, 2006). The nearest residential property is approximately 100 feet north of the project area, and it would receive an estimated construction related noise of approximately 79 dBA. Noise generated from construction would be intermittent, heard only during the daytime hours of 0700 to 1900, and only for the duration of the construction activities. The group site resident noise would not be expected to exceed the 66 dBA limit set by the county. The project would be required to follow local and county ordinances. Based on the review conducted, Alternative 2 would have minor short-term adverse impact on local noise. The impact would not be significant.

5.5.3 TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is the jurisdictional authority for traffic and transportation in the state of Florida. FDOT was created pursuant to Section 20.23, Florida Statutes, which sets forth the legal structure and general description of FDOT. FDOT's mission is to provide a safe transportation system that ensures the mobility of people and goods, enhances

economic prosperity, and preserves the quality of Florida's environment and communities. FDOT's goal is to make travel in Florida safer and more efficient.

The Lee County Department of Transportation (DOT) works with local, state, and Federal partners to enhance the roadways throughout the region. Lee County DOT is responsible for providing safe and efficient transportation and stormwater systems for the residents of Lee County.

The proposed Deep Blue Group Site is located south of Pine Island Road which a two-way undivided road which serves as the main access road, providing ingress and egress, for Pine Island to the Florida mainland. The eastern boundary of the site abuts Betsy Parkway. The southern boundary abuts Center Plaza Lane. The southwestern boundary abuts Stringfellow Road. Currently no improved ingress or egress exists onto the project site from any of the abutting roadways.

Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the site would not undergo the installation of utilities on the site, construction of gravel roadways and parking lots, placement of stone-base and concrete for pads, residential parking, and associated appurtenance to facilitate up to 40 MHUs on the project site. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have no impact to transportation and traffic.

Alternative 2 – Develop the Deep Blue Group Site with MHUs (Preferred Alternative)

Under Alternative 2, the proposed action would result in the installation of up to 40 MHUs. The proposed plan includes three points of ingress and egress onto the site including two from Betsy Parkway, and one from Stringfellow Road. MHUs would be transported onto the site from both Betsy Parkway and Stringfellow Road. Traffic circulation in the vicinity of the Deep Blue Group Site along Pine Island Drive, which is still recovering to pre-disaster levels, currently displays moderate to heavy traffic during most hours.

According to FDOT Open Data Hub (<https://gis-fdot.opendata.arcgis.com/>), accessed on March 7, 2023, the annual average daily traffic in the vicinity of the proposed group site along Pine Island Road and Stringfellow Road is 12,500 vehicles and 4,750 vehicles respectively. This number along Pine Island Road is expected to temporarily increase. The local county and municipality would have jurisdiction over the regulation of safe traffic. The proposed action would include parking access for each MHU, and a lack of safe parking access is not anticipated. Based on the review conducted, Alternative 2 is expected to have a temporary minor adverse impact to transportation and traffic. This impact would not be significant.

5.5.4 HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND SOLID WASTES

Hazardous materials are declared hazardous through various federal regulations including 40 CFR Parts 302.4 and 355, and 29 CFR Part 1910.1200. Hazardous waste is any solid, liquid, or

contained gas waste that is dangerous or potentially harmful to humans and the health of the environment. Thousands of contaminated sites exist nation-wide due to hazardous waste being dumped, left out in the open, or otherwise improperly managed and disposed. In response, Congress established the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) on December 11, 1980. CERCLA, commonly known as Superfund, was enacted to allow EPA to clean up contaminated sites. The EPA utilizes the National Priorities List (NPL), a list of contaminated sites of national priority, to guide the determination of which sites warrant further investigation. According to the NPL, accessed March 6, 2023, the project area does not contain any Superfund sites.

An EPA designated Brownfield site is a property where the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. A Brownfield area is a contiguous area of one or more Brownfield sites.

Upon review of the FDEP Contamination Map Report (<https://prodenv.dep.state.fl.us/DepClnup>), accessed on March 6, 2023, there are three contamination sites identified within a one-mile radius from the target property with potential environmental concerns. The following entities identified are as follows: Gas N Goodies Food Mart #1, FDEP Facility #8510160, reported a release of petroleum products. Per FDEP letter dated March 8, 2017, “minimal contamination exists that is associated with the discharge reference above and such contamination is not a threat to human health or the environment.” Edison Oil, FDEP Facility #8519399, reported a release of petroleum products. Remediation efforts and ground water monitoring within the property boundaries are ongoing. The risk or extent of the contamination are unknown to FEMA currently. Circle K #7336, FDEP Facility #8518978, reported a release of petroleum products. Remediation efforts and ground water monitoring within the property boundaries are ongoing. The risk or extent of the contamination are unknown to FEMA currently.

A review of the EPA NEPA Assist online web map search tool (<https://www.epa.gov/nepa/nepaassist>), accessed March 6, 2023, indicated there are zero Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) hazardous waste sites and no sites listed on the NPL within one mile of the project location.

These sites pose no recognized environmental concern at the time of this draft EA. The threshold level for a significant impact to hazardous materials and waste would include a release of hazardous materials or waste, or a violation of local, state, or federal regulations pertaining to hazardous materials or waste.

Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no impact on hazardous materials, hazardous waste, and solid waste.

Alternative 2 – Develop the Deep Blue Group Site with MHUs (Preferred Alternative)

Under Alternative 2, there would be no anticipated impacts from hazardous materials and hazardous substances. Any unusable equipment, debris, and material on site would be disposed of prior to occupancy in an approved manner and location. In the event significant items (or evidence thereof) are discovered during implementation of the project, the contractor shall handle, manage, and dispose of regulated, petroleum products, and hazardous materials or wastes in accordance with the rules and regulations and to the satisfaction of the governing local, state and federal agencies. Based on the review conducted, Alternative 2 would have a negligible impact on hazardous materials or waste. The impact would not be significant.

5.5.5 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

A considerable number of health and safety laws and regulations exist for a wide variety of activities. An exhaustive review of these various rules is beyond the scope of this draft EA. With regards to worker safety, the U.S. Congress enacted the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, 29 USC § 651 et seq. (OSHA) to assure safe and healthful working conditions for working men and women.

Occupational health and safety hazards could include chemical agents (such as asbestos or lead), physical agents (such as noise or vibration), physical hazards (such as slip, trip, and fall hazards, electricity, or machinery), or biological hazards (such as infectious waste, poisonous plants, ticks, or other hazardous biota). Occupational health and safety concerns could affect both workers and other non-workers near the project site. Public safety hazards may include any direct or indirect effects related to the construction, removal, or operation of the group site. County, state, municipal law enforcement and emergency services, and contractors are responsible for following applicable local, state, and federal regulations so the proposed group site does not significantly adversely affect the general public.

Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the site would not undergo the installation of utilities on the site, construction of gravel roadways and parking lots, placement of stone-base and concrete for trailer pads, residential parking, and associated appurtenance to facilitate up to 40 MHUs on the project site. Therefore, the No Action Alternative will have no impact on occupational health and safety.

Alternative 2 – Develop the Deep Blue Group Site with MHUs (Preferred Alternative)

Under Alternative 2, the proposed action would include hazards common to construction and demolition activities, such as loud noise, heavy machinery, debris, electricity, and hazardous materials used or encountered during work. To minimize occupational health and safety risks,

workers would wear and use appropriate personal protective equipment and follow all applicable OSHA standards and procedures. A health and safety plan would be developed and implemented for work by the contractors. Work areas would be clearly marked with appropriate signage and secured against unauthorized entry. Standard construction traffic control measures would be used to protect workers, residents, and the surrounding public. Based on the review conducted, Alternative 2 would have negligible adverse impact on occupational health and safety. The impact would not be significant.

5.5.6 UTILITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES

A public utility is an organization that maintains the infrastructure for a public service. The interruption of public utilities can cause public health concerns. A reduction in the reliability of public utility services affects all areas of daily life. Utilities for this draft EA are defined as water storage facilities; treatment plants and delivery systems; supplemental power generation, transmission, and distribution facilities, including, but not limited to, wind turbines, generators, substations and power lines, natural gas transmission and distribution facilities; sewage collection systems and treatment plants; landfills; and communication systems.

Potable water, sanitation, and electrical power exist adjacent to the proposed group site. Local public services have also indicated the ability to provide service to the group site. Matlacha/Pine Island Fire Control District indicated in a letter, dated February 27, 2023, the responding fire protection and rescue apparatuses are available 0.8 miles west of the subject site and two other locations are available within five miles. Lee County Sheriff's office indicated in a letter dated March 6, 2023, the development of the group site would not impact the ability of the Lee County Sheriff's Office to provide law enforcement services to the group site and greater community. Lee County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) indicated in a letter, dated February 27, 2023, EMS availability for the group site is adequate at the time of the letter. These letters of service availability are attached to this draft EA (Appendix G).

Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the site would not undergo the installation of utilities on the site, construction of gravel roadways and parking lots, placement of stone-base and concrete for trailer pads, residential parking, and associated appurtenance to facilitate up to 40 MHUs on the project site. Therefore, the No Action Alternative will have no impact on utilities.

Alternative 2 – Develop the Deep Blue Group Site with MHUs (Preferred Alternative)

Under Alternative 2, the construction of the group site necessitates service of potable water, sanitation, and electrical power. The current service range of these utilities exist throughout Pine Island and infrastructure exists all around the proposed site. The proposed group site will be tied

into existing Pine Island infrastructure and will service the up to 40 proposed MHUs. The current service capacity for these utilities to accommodate the group site exists. The subject site was a previously planned phased development for a commercial storage facility and associated utility demand. The utilities that are installed for group site use will be removed once the group site is decommissioned. Based on the review conducted, Alternative 2 would have no impacts on local utilities and public service availability and capacity.

5.5.7 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, EQUITY, AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

On February 11, 1994, President Clinton signed EO 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations, which directs federal agencies to address and avoid disproportionate environmental and human health impacts from federal actions on minority and low-income populations. All federal agencies must analyze the environmental effects, including human health, social, and economic effects, on minority and low-income communities. The impacted area includes all areas of the scope of work for the proposed project, any staging areas or hauling routes, and any areas outside of the immediate project area that may be impacted indirectly by the proposed project.

In January 2021, President Biden issued EO 13985, Executive Order on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce, and EO 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, to further address the need to achieve environmental justice and equity across the federal government. These new executive orders direct federal agencies to renew their energy, effort, resources, and attention to implement environmental justice and underscore the Administration's commitment to environmental justice.

Guidelines for the protection of children are specified in EO 13045, Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risk (Federal Register, Volume, 62, Number 78, April 23, 1997). This EO requires federal agencies make it a high priority to identify and assess policies, programs, and standards addressing disproportionate adverse risks to children resulting from environmental health or safety risks.

The proposed Deep Blue Group Site is located on Pine Island, Lee County, Florida. According to the United States Census Bureau, the population of Lee County was 760,822 with a total of 428,910 housing units in 2020. The median household income was estimated to be approximately \$63,235 (based on 2017 to 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates). According to the 2017 to 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, approximately 12.2% of population in Lee County lives below poverty levels. According to the EPA Environmental Justice Screen Tool (<https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>) accessed on March 7, 2023, the population within a one-mile radius of the proposed group site is approximately 664, with a total of 315 housing units.

In Lee County, the age and sex distribution of the population is summarized by the 2020 Census as: 6.9% of the population is 5 and under, 21.0% of the population is under 18, 21.6% of the population is 65 years and over, and 50.8% of the total population is female. The race and Hispanic distribution are as follows: 58.7% of the population is white, 23.2% of the population is black or African American, 0.2% of the population is American Indian and Alaska native, 2.2% of the population is Asian, 0.2% of the population is native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, 9.0% of the population is two or more races, and 23.0% of the total population is Hispanic or Latino. According to the EPA Environmental Justice Screen Tool (EJScreen) (<https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>) accessed on March 7, 2023, the age and sex distribution of the population within a one-mile radius is: 4% age zero to four, 24% age zero to 17, 76% age 18 and older, and 30% age 65 and older. This includes a gender distribution of 46% male, and 54% female. Population by race within a one-mile radius is: 74% White, 25% Black, 0% American Indian, 0% Asian, 0% Pacific Islander, 1% Hispanic, with 0% of the population reporting as two or more races. Further demographic information including housing, educational attainment, and household linguistics can be found in Appendix H.

The EPA's EJScreen demographic index within a one-mile radius of the proposed Deep Blue Group Site is in the 52nd percentile for the State of Florida, and within the 60th percentile for the United States. The demographic index in EJScreen is a combination of percent low-income and percent minority, the two socioeconomic factors explicitly named in EO 12898. For each Census block group, these two numbers are averaged together. The demographic index is equal to the percentage of people of color plus the percentage of low-income; the combined percentage is then divided by two. Other factors within high national percentile ranges (greater than 80%), or of significant interest are: (1) Limited English Speaking is in the 84th percentile; and (2) Persons Over Age 64 is in the 89th percentile. The full EJScreen report is attached to this draft EA (Appendix H).

Historically, families and individuals living close to or under the poverty line are more susceptible to homelessness and displacement risk after natural disasters and are more likely to need direct housing assistance.

Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the installation of utilities, construction of gravel roadways and parking lots, placement of stone-base and concrete for pads, residential parking, and associated appurtenances to facilitate up to 40 MHUs on the project site would not be completed. Those in need of direct housing assistance would have to find alternative means of housing. Families in the vicinity of the proposed site who are denied group site housing would likely be disproportionately low-income and minority households. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have a moderate adverse impact human health or environmental effects on minority or low-income

populations and may result in disproportionate health or safety risks to children. The impact would be significant.

Alternative 2 – Develop the Deep Blue Group Site with MHUs (Preferred Alternative)

According to the United States 2020 Census Bureau, the total population within a 1-mile radius of the Deep Blue Group Site is approximately 795. Under Alternative 2, with the establishment of the temporary group site, up to 40 households could be temporarily relocated to the Deep Blue Group Site. These households will consist of current residents of the local community area impacted by Hurricane Ian. The overall demand for public and commercial services is not expected to be greater than the pre-disaster demand and potential impacts are expected to be minimal.

Alternative 2 will provide housing relief to the communities affected by Hurricane Ian in proximity to the proposed group site. The availability of federal assistance, including temporary housing for displaced individuals, who likely represent a disproportionate number of low-income and minority households, is consistent with EO 12898. All forms of FEMA disaster housing assistance are available to any affected household that meets the conditions of eligibility, and demographics are not among the eligibility requirements. The group site would be a temporary housing solution and would be installed at the proposed location for no longer than 18 months from the date of the federal disaster declaration, therefore, no long-term adverse impacts to public health or to the environment would be expected.

The specific demographics of group site occupants are not available at this time because individuals or families are in the process of being identified for the group site. However, the demographic makeup of the group site residents is expected to be similar to the community as a whole, primarily low income or minority households. According to program policy, survivors must be placed within 50 miles of their damaged dwelling. An effort is being made to keep applicants within a reasonable commuting distance, defined as, “a distance that does not place undue hardship on an applicant.” FEMA to the best of its ability intends to house impacted residents of Pine Island and Matlacha on Pine Island so they remain within their community and avoid undue hardship. Furthermore, the availability of temporary housing would result in a positive impact to displaced individuals, regardless of whether they are classified as minority or low income.

Based on the review conducted, Alternative 2 is not expected to have disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental impacts on minority or low-income populations. Activities under Alternative 2 would be expected to have a moderate beneficial impact on local socioeconomics. The impact would be significant.

6.0 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Per the CEQ regulations, cumulative impacts refer to the impact on the environment that “results from the incremental impact of the action when added to the 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 taken place over a period of time” (40 CFR 1508.7). In accordance with NEPA, this draft EA considered combined effects of the preferred alternative and other actions occurring or proposed in the vicinity of the proposed project site. Cumulative impacts are defined as environmental effects that are greater in magnitude, extent, or duration than the direct and indirect effects of the proposed FEMA-associated action when combined with the effects of other current and future actions, regardless of the proponent.

Due to the temporary nature of this proposed group site, and the anticipated decommissioning of the entire site including infrastructure and associated appurtenances, it is unlikely to contribute to any substantive cumulative effect locally or regionally. This temporary development and its potential impact merits only a brief discussion regarding cumulative effects, if any, that may affect the region.

Cumulative impacts associated with past incremental actions by both federal and non-federal parties has had a marked effect on the human and natural environment. Changes to the human environment, including air quality, noise pollution, rising average temperatures, increasing traffic, variable crime rates, the presence of poverty, homelessness, and variable socioeconomic disparity can be attributed, in whole or in part, to incremental regional development, human expansion, and policy decisions. Considering the natural environment, past deleterious effects to native plant and animal species have likely occurred. Phenomena such as deteriorating water quality, harmful algal blooms, red tide, mass species die off events, and the continued loss and fragmentation of habitat can all be attributed, in whole or in part, to the same incremental regional development, human expansion, and policy decisions.

Presently, the subject site does not represent a high-quality natural resource or aquatic site, nor does it function as critical habitat for threatened or endangered species. The property owner, as indicated in the SFWMD permit application, intended to develop the parcel as a commercial storage facility. According to the permit application, this development included commercial structures, roadways, infrastructure, and associated appurtenances. The potential for this development to occur after the group site is decommissioned is unknown. The site does support a small arrangement of emergent wetland systems. However, the quality of these systems is speculated to be poor, and the remainder of the site doesn't include any habitat or resources of critical significance. Considering the larger region of Pine Island, the existence of undeveloped, wild, or naturally occurring land is limited outside the coastal and riparian areas. These areas

include wetlands, dune systems, and coastal mangrove wetlands of variable quality. None of these resources exist within the project boundary.

The temporary conversion of this undeveloped land carries little negative impact associated with natural resources through the next 10 to 30 years except for a marginal increase of adverse effects associated with human activity in the region. The temporary increase of residential capacity doesn't merit a projection of future development, and associated adverse impacts, that deviates significantly from the current trajectory in the region. The likelihood the wetlands and special aquatic sites around Pine Island remain undeveloped due to local, state, federal restrictions and conservation measures remains high. The anticipated impacts associated with the proposed action has a low to moderate likelihood of adversely affecting the continued existence of these natural resources in the region now and into the future.

Considering reasonably foreseeable future incremental effects can be difficult. However, one such approach is projecting current trends forward. This is speculated to be more of the same variable deterioration of the human and natural environment already discussed. It is unlikely the adverse phenomena described previously will reverse course in a meaningful way outside of long-term incremental improvements contingent on local and regional policy decisions, increased conservation measures and social initiatives to address socioeconomic disparity and general human welfare.

7.0 PERMIT AND PROJECT CONDITIONS

1. Prior to construction, an appropriate SWPPP, Erosion Control Plan, and NPDES permit must be obtained, and the FEMA Logistics contractor must comply with all of the conditions prescribed by the permit.
2. If necessary, appropriate dewatering permits are required prior to dewatering activities and the FEMA Logistics contractor must comply with all of the conditions prescribed by the permit.
3. The appropriate signage must be posted and fencing installed to minimize potential adverse public safety concerns. Appropriate signage and barriers would be in place prior to construction activities in order to alert pedestrians and motorists of project activities and traffic pattern changes.
4. Under Alternative 2, SHPO and NHPA Conditions are applicable:
 - a. All borrow or fill material must come from pre-existing stockpiles, material reclaimed from maintained roadside ditches (provided the designed width or depth of the ditch is not increased), or commercially procured material from a source existing prior to the event. Use of a non-commercial source or a commercial source that was not permitted to operate prior to the event (e.g., a new pit, agricultural fields, road ROWs, etc.) in whole or in part, the Logistics contractor must notify

FEMA prior to extracting material. FEMA must review the source for compliance with all applicable federal environmental planning and historic preservation laws and executive orders prior to the contractor commencing borrow extraction. Consultation and regulatory permitting may be required.

- b. If human remains or intact archaeological deposits are uncovered, work in the vicinity of the discovery will stop immediately and all reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm to the finds will be taken. The FEMA Logistics contractor will ensure that archaeological discoveries are secured in place, that access to the sensitive area is restricted, and that all reasonable measures are taken to avoid further disturbance of the discoveries. The FEMA Logistics contractor will provide immediate notice of such discoveries to FEMA. The FEMA Logistics contractor shall contact the Florida Division of Historic Resources and FEMA within 24 hours of the discovery. Work in the vicinity of the discovery may not resume until FEMA has completed consultation with SHPO, Tribes, and other consulting parties as necessary. In the event that unmarked human remains are encountered during permitted activities; all work shall stop immediately, and the proper authorities notified in accordance with Florida Statutes, Section 872.05.
 - c. Construction vehicles and equipment will be stored onsite during the project or at existing access points within the site right-of-way.
 - d. Any changes to the approved scope of work will require submission to, and evaluation and approval by, the State and FEMA, prior to initiation of any work, for compliance with Section 106.
 - e. In the event of inadvertent discoveries of human remains and related Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) items occur in areas of existing or prior development, work shall cease and the Seminole Tribe of Florida, The Miccosukee Tribe, The Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, The Poarch Band of Creek Indians, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, and other appropriate agencies shall be notified immediately.
5. Handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials and waste during construction activities, including measures to prevent releases, must be conducted in accordance with applicable environmental compliance regulations.
 6. Appropriate BMPs will be implemented during site development to minimize sediment migration from the site into nearby water bodies. Surface runoff will be controlled by using siltation controls such as silt fencing around the construction site to minimize erosion of materials into adjacent wetlands or waterways. Any disturbed soil will be protected with seed or sod after construction in order to decrease the amount of soil eroded by rainfall and runoff. Any fill stored on site will be appropriately covered to prevent erosion. If the project results in a discharge to waters of the State, a NPDES permit may be required in accordance with the Section 401 of the CWA and the Florida Water Quality Certification.

7. Unusable equipment, debris and material will be disposed of prior to occupancy in an approved manner and location. In the event significant items (or evidence thereof) are discovered during implementation of the project, petroleum products, hazardous materials, and toxic waste will be handled, managed, and disposed of in accordance with the requirements and to the satisfaction of the governing local, state, and federal agencies.
8. Construction activities with elevated noise levels will be limited from 0700 to 1900, unless otherwise approved by the County. Equipment and machinery used during construction will meet all local, State, and federal noise regulations.
9. MHUs shall comply with 24 C.F.R. Part 3280 Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards (“Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD] code”).
10. The FEMA Logistics contractor is responsible for obtaining any required FDEP ERP permits and waivers. Compliance with FDEP requirements constitutes compliance with Florida CZM. Failure to comply with these conditions may jeopardize FEMA funding; verification of compliance will be required at project closeout.
11. Under EO 11988 the following eight step conditions apply:
 - a. Per EO 11988 and 44 CFR 9.12(f) requirements, construction of the group site cannot begin until the public notice period closes.
 - b. Minimization measures described in Step 5 must be implemented.
 - c. Best available flood hazard information (BAI) In accordance with the Memo from Jacky S. Bell, Mitigation Division Director, FEMA Region 4, dated 10/6/2020, SUBJECT: Guidance for Use of Available Information in Complying with 44 CFR Part 9 and EO 11988 (Floodplain Management), FEMA shall evaluate each TT and MHU placement site individually and make a determination regarding the suitability for TT and MHU placement based on the BAI for that site.
 - d. Coordination with the local floodplain administrator must occur prior to placement. All coordination pertaining to these activities and applicant compliance with any conditions should be documented and copies forwarded to the state and FEMA for inclusion in the permanent project files.
 - e. Placement of MHUs must be in accordance and in compliance with Florida and local regulations.
 - f. Local Permitting and Codes: Any FEMA units will be installed in compliance with applicable local codes, ordinances and permitting requirements. Any contracted logistics installation entities (installers) for MHU placement will secure all pertinent Federal, state, and local permits and approvals before work.
 - g. Health and Safety: Before unit occupancy, the responsible program, will provide applicants with a Health and Safety Advisory regarding the flood hazard, local emergency evacuation plans, right-of-entry during an emergency, and possible unit haul off.

- h. The responsible program will ensure the local emergency manager has information regarding location of MHU occupants and potential special needs, to integrate into local emergency plans.
12. Any FEMA units will be installed in compliance with applicable local codes, ordinances and permitting requirements. Any contracted logistics installation entities (installers) for MHU placement will secure all pertinent Federal, state, and local permits and approvals before work.
13. If federally listed threatened or endangered species, or potential threatened or endangered species habitat (including gopher tortoises or burrows), are found on or within close proximity to the project site, all work will immediately cease, and the relevant authorities, including FEMA and USFWS will be contacted. Construction will not resume until the appropriate permits are obtained.
 - a. If gopher tortoises or burrows are found at the project locations and burrows cannot be avoided by 25 feet or more, an appropriate gopher tortoise permit must be obtained from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
 - b. If Florida burrowing owls or burrows are found at the project locations and burrows cannot be avoided by 33 feet or more, an appropriate Burrowing Owl permit must be obtained from the FWC.
14. Before unit occupancy, the responsible program, will provide applicants with a Health and Safety Advisory regarding the flood hazard, local emergency evacuation plans, right-of-entry during an emergency, and possible unit haul off.
15. The responsible program will ensure the local emergency manager has information regarding location of MHU occupants and potential special needs, to integrate into local emergency plans.
16. Once the temporary housing need has ended, FEMA expects that all MHUs will be hauled from the site in accordance with Section 408(d)(2) of the Stafford Act and returned to a FEMA storage facility. Furthermore, the project site would be either reasonably restored to its previous condition and then seeded or left with the site improvements per the lease terms negotiated between the State with the landowner.

8.0 AGENCY COORDINATION AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The following agencies were contacted during the preparation of this draft EA:

- Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- Florida Division of Historic Resources (SHPO)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Lee County Sheriff's Office
- Matlacha/Pine Island Fire Control District

- Lee County Utilities
- Lee County Board of County Commissioners

FEMA issued a disaster-wide initial public notice for Hurricane Ian on October 6, 2022 (Appendix J), to notify the public of projects under the PA, Individual Assistance, and Hazard Mitigation Grant programs that may be occurring within floodplains or wetlands. The public was notified of the availability of this draft EA for review and comment by posting of the public notice (Appendix L) on Florida Department of Emergency Management (FDEM) website; FEMA’s website; at the project location; the Lee County Administrative building located at 2115 2nd Street, Fort Myers, Florida 33901; the Lee County Public Works building located at 1500 Monroe Street, Fort Myers, Florida 33901; the Lakes Regional Library located at 15290 Bass Road, Fort Myers, Florida 33919; and the Pine Island Public Library located at 10701 Russell Road, Bokeelia, Florida 33922. Physical copies of the draft EA were made readily available to the public at the Florida Department of Emergency Management (FDEM) website; FEMA’s website; the Lee County Administrative building located at 2115 2nd Street, Fort Myers, Florida 33901; the Lee County Public Works building located at 1500 Monroe Street, Fort Myers, Florida 33901; the Lakes Regional Library located at 15290 Bass Road, Fort Myers, Florida 33919; and the Pine Island Public Library located at 10701 Russell Road, Bokeelia, Florida 33922. The public comment period was limited, due to the emergency nature of this action and the pressing need to provide temporary housing solutions for survivors of Hurricane Ian. The public comment will end on 5/15/2023, after 3 days from the date of initial posting (5/12/2023).

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**Appendices are available for review upon request to
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