



**FEMA**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
**Mitchell Flash Flood Warning Mitigation Project, Mitchell, Oregon**  
**Hazard Mitigation Grant Program: HMGP-4169-06**

The city of Mitchell, OR, requested funding from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the construction of a flash flood warning system. This system is to be funded under the 5% initiative (Equipment and systems for the purpose of warning citizens of impending hazards) set aside for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) from the 2014 presidentially declared disaster 4169-DR-OR. The flash flood warning mitigation project has been identified as a priority by Wheeler County and the city of Mitchell. The State of Oregon's 2015 *Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan* (NHMP) addresses flood warning systems as priority actions for implementation by focusing resources on those communities with the greatest risks and vulnerabilities. Financial support from FEMA will bring the flash flood warning system to a functioning level, with expansion of the system to be made as additional funds become available.

The Proposed Action is located in Wheeler County, Oregon and identifies the minimum number of sensors and gauges needed to provide a flash flood warning to the city of Mitchell residents. The Proposed Action includes the installation of up to seven (7) gauges: three (3) precipitation gauges and four (4) stream gauges that will compile and monitor data to provide warning in the event a flash flood is imminent. The precipitation gauges will be secured to a 4" to 6" post and sunk into the ground. Each will be solar powered, with a small backup battery. The stream gauges will be housed inside a 2" diameter steel pipe, about 3' in length, oriented vertically, and secured to the existing utility poles and/or bridges/water crossings using brackets. Each stream gauge will also have a small data collection box, solar panel, and backup battery. If necessary, the stream gauges could be attached to small posts and sunk in the ground directly adjacent to the existing utility and within the utility right of way (ROW). As needed the gauges will have a protective fence consisting of three 12' long steel fence sections, placed in a triangle formation, and pinned with "T" fence posts. Each gauge will utilize existing infrastructure (utility/bridge/water crossing), with the exception of the precipitation gauge located within the Ochoco National Forest off FS road #459. A US Forest Service Special Use Permit is being secured for this precipitation gauge.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and FEMA's implementing regulations, FEMA prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to identify and evaluate potential environmental effects resulting from the alternatives presented in the EA and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). Alternatives evaluated in the EA include: 1) No Action, and 2) the Proposed Action to install a flash flood warning system. Alternative gauge locations and the construction of a flood control system were considered but not carried forth as described in the EA. The Draft EA was made available for public review and comment at the Volunteer Fire Department, General Store and Post Office for 15 days beginning on August 31, 2015; as well as notification published in the local paper September 14, 2015; no substantive comments were received. The Proposed Action is the preferred alternative because the No Action alternative would not address the purpose and need stated in the EA and no other practical alternatives were identified. Thus, the Proposed Action is selected.



## FINDINGS

In accordance with 1) FEMA's regulations in 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 10 for environmental considerations, including Executive Orders (EO) addressing floodplains (EO 11988), wetlands (EO 11990), and environmental justice (EO 12898); and 2) the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations in 40 CFR Chapter 5 for implementing NEPA; FEMA determined the proposed project will not significantly affect the quality of the natural and human environment. As a result of this FONSI, an EIS will not be prepared (44 CFR § 10.8) and the project may proceed as described above and conditioned below.

## APPROVAL



Mark G. Eberlein  
Regional Environmental Officer

9-28-15

Date

## PERMITTING, PROJECT CONDITIONS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

The City of Mitchell would comply with the following project conditions and mitigation measures during project implementation:

- The City is responsible for securing all applicable Tribal, State and Federal permitting before site work and complying with conditions therein.
- In the event that cultural resources including human remains are discovered during project activities—and in compliance with State and Federal laws protecting cultural resources and human remains, including Section 106 of the NHPA—work in the immediate vicinity would cease, the area would be secured, and SHPO and FEMA would be notified in order to evaluate the discovery.
- Any change to the approved scope of work would require re-evaluation for compliance with NEPA and other laws and EOs before implementation.