



# FEMA

U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Louisiana Recovery Office  
1500 Main St.  
Baton Rouge LA, 70802

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
FOR THE  
LAKE HERMITAGE ROAD ELEVATION  
PLAQUEMINES PARISH, LOUISIANA  
*FEMA-1603-DR-LA***

**BACKGROUND**

Lake Hermitage Road is located in Plaquemine Parish on the west bank of the Mississippi River near Myrtle Grove and extends away from Louisiana Highway 23 for approximately five (5) miles. It is the primary access road for three (3) main bayou communities and is the primary evacuation route for residents and several offshore commercial activities. Lake Hermitage Road lies outside the flood protection levee system and is subject to flooding during high tidal conditions. Recent evaluations indicate that the road is regularly flooded during normal high tide events

The proposed project would raise and improve the Lake Hermitage Road for approximately five (5) miles, starting from the junction of Highway 23 and Lake Hermitage Road and extending to the bridge crossing at Hermitage Bayou (near Bayou Lane). Road improvements would include: raising the roadway approximately 10 inches, to a minimum elevation of +2.5 feet National Geodetic Vertical Datum (NGVD 29) through the installation of a limestone base followed by an asphalt pavement; and the installation of three (3) new drainage culverts. The improvements would stay within the existing right-of-way and would provide two (2) 12-foot wide driving lanes with two (2) foot wide shoulders.

In accordance with 44 CFR Part 10, FEMA's regulations to implement the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared. The purpose of the EA was to analyze the potential environmental impacts associated with the elevation of the road, and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The need for the proposed project is to provide safe public and municipality ingress and egress that is up to current codes and standards in order to continue to provide access to residences and emergency services in the area. The alternatives considered include 1) No Action Alternative; 2) Alternative Two (2) (Preferred) – Elevate and Pave the 5 mile stretch of the road; 3) Alternative Three (3) –Buyout All The Residences and Businesses and Remove All Structures and Facilities and Restore Marsh on the Site.

Plaquemines Parish, the applicant, seeks FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and the United States (U.S.) Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) federal grant funds to elevate the Lake Hermitage Road. After analyzing the alternatives, the Alternative to buyout all the residences and businesses and remove all structures and facilities and restore marsh on the site was dismissed from further consideration. The applicant is unable to meet the costs for such a Relocation associated with this Alternative. This Alternative would not meet the necessary codes and standards required to continue to provide community services and operations to residences surrounding the location in the original footprint.

## **FINDINGS**

FEMA has evaluated the proposed project for significant adverse impacts to geology, soils, water resources (surface water, groundwater, and wetlands), floodplains, coastal resources, air quality, biological resources (vegetation, fish and wildlife, Federally-listed threatened or endangered species and critical habitats), cultural resources, socioeconomics (including minority and low income populations), safety, noise, and hazardous materials. The results of these evaluations as well as consultations and input from other federal and state agencies are presented in the EA.

## **CONDITIONS**

The following conditions must be met as part of the implementation of the project. Failure to comply with these conditions may jeopardize federal funding:

- The applicant must complete a jurisdictional wetland determination and submit it to USACE and complete the permitting process. All correspondence must be submitted to FEMA-EHP for inclusion into the project files.
- The project is within and directly adjacent to jurisdictional wetlands as per documentation provided by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Extreme care must be taken during the construction process through the appropriate use and maintenance of Best Management Practices (BMPs). Applicant must adhere to all conditions outlined in Clean Water Act Section 401 permits associated with the project.
- Erosion Control Devices (ECD's) such as silt fencing, hay bales, sediment traps, etc. must be used and maintained extensively to prevent any potential direct or indirect adverse impacts to nearby wetland areas per the Clean Water Act (CWA) and E.O. 11990. Any adverse impacts to adjacent wetlands resulting from the construction of this project will jeopardize receipt of federal funding.
- Proper signage must clearly identify the adjacent wetland boundaries to help prevent any potential adverse impacts from construction vehicles, equipment, or supplies accidentally leaving the boundaries of the approved Right Of Way.



- Per 44 CFR 9.11(d)(6), no project should be built to a floodplain management standard that is less protective than what the community has adopted in local ordinances through their participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
- The Parish must control all filling, grading, and other construction development so as to not increase the potential for future flood damage.
- The project must be designed to avoid any altering of the natural floodplains and/or the formation of flood barriers which increase flood hazards to adjacent lands
- Applicant must ensure compliance with all parish and city ordinances. All correspondence must be submitted to FEMA and FEMA-EHP for inclusion in the project files. Should the site plans (including drainage design) change the applicant must submit changes to FEMA-EHP for review and approval prior to the start of construction.
- Applicant is required to coordinate with the local floodplain administrator regarding building permits, clearances, drainage studies, etc. Documentation of all coordination activities with the local floodplain administrator pertaining to this project shall be submitted to the LA GOHSEP and FEMA for inclusion in the permanent project files.
- If any solid or hazardous waste materials, or soils and/or groundwater contaminated with hazardous constituents are encountered during the project, the LDEQ Single-Point-of-Contact (SPOC) must be contacted at (225) 219-3640 to initiate appropriate measures for the proper assessment, remediation, management and disposal of the contaminated material. Additionally, precautions should be taken to protect workers from these hazardous constituents.
- If human bone or unmarked grave(s) are present with the project area, compliance with the Louisiana Unmarked Human Burial Sites Preservation Act (Revised Statutes 8:671 et seq.) is required. The applicant shall notify the law enforcement agency of the jurisdiction where the remains are located within twenty-four hours of the discovery. The applicant shall also notify FEMA and the Louisiana Division of Archaeology at 225-342-8170 within seventy-two hours of the discovery.
- If during the course of work, archaeological artifacts (prehistoric or historic) are discovered, the applicant shall stop work in the vicinity of the discovery and take all reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm to the finds. The applicant shall inform its Public Assistance contacts at FEMA, who will in turn contact FEMA Historic Preservation staff. The applicant will not proceed with work until FEMA HP completes consultation with the SHPO.



- Any fill or borrow material used must be sourced from areas that do not contain any buried cultural materials (e.g. brick foundations, prehistoric Indian artifacts, human burials, and the like).
- FEMA is requiring, as a condition of this grant, that no construction staging occur in areas that are not currently covered in gravel, asphalt, or concrete (i.e., previously disturbed ROWs or "protected" surfaces) surrounding the southern terminus of the APE near the intersection of Lake Hermitage Road and Bayou Lane.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based upon the incorporated EA, and in accordance with Presidential Executive Orders 12898 (Environmental Justice), 11988 (Floodplain Management), and 11990 (Wetland Protection), FEMA has determined that the preferred action implemented with the conditions and mitigation measures outlined above and in the EA will not have any significant adverse effects on the quality of the natural and human environment.

As a result of this FONSI, an EIS will not be prepared (44 CFR Part 10.8) and the preferred action alternative as described in the EA may proceed.

## APPROVALS

   
 Kevin Jaynes  
 Regional Environmental Officer  
 Region VI  
 FEMA 1603-1607-DR-LA

   
 Digitally signed by THOMAS M WOMACK  
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