

**FEMA PUBLIC NOTICE OF
DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
FOR LOVERS KEY AND BONITA BEACH NOURISHMENT
LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) hereby gives notice to the public of its intent to reimburse eligible applicants for eligible costs to repair or replace facilities damaged by **Hurricane Ian** occurring between **September 23, 2022, and November 04, 2022**. This notice applies to the Public Assistance (PA) project for the Lee County proposed Lovers Key and Bonita Beach Nourishment project in Lee County, Florida, implemented under the authority of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207.

Under a major disaster declaration, **FEMA-DR-4673-FL**, signed by President Biden on **September 29, 2022**, Lee County was designated as adversely affected by the disaster and eligible for PA funding.

This public notice concerns activities pertaining to the Lee County proposed Lovers Key and Bonita Beach Nourishment project. The proposed renourishment activities would occur along approximately 1.9 miles of shoreline between GPS coordinates: (26.394372, -81.883908) to (26.381000, -81.871028) and (26.36431, -81.86300) to (26.35475, -81.85762).

The proposed project is to restore the shorelines of Lovers Key and Bonita Beach to the full engineered design beach template with the amount of sand lost from Hurricane Ian plus additional sand lost from background erosion. Additionally, south Bonita Beach, a previously unengineered beach, would undergo a one-time sand replacement to the mean high-water line (MHWL). These actions would occur concurrently with Lee County's previously scheduled beach maintenance activities. The beach-compatible sand for this project would be sourced from three submerged borrow areas. Two of the borrow areas are previously used nearshore sources that are currently permitted. The third borrow area is an untapped offshore source currently undergoing permitting. Approximately 52,589 cubic yards (CY) of beach-compatible sand and 82,400 dune plants would be placed at Lovers Key and Bonita Beach along approximately 1.9 miles of shoreline between GPS coordinates (26.394372, -81.883908) to (26.381000, -81.871028) and (26.36431, -81.86300) to (26.35475, -81.85762), with an additional 70,000 CY to get South Bonita Beach to the MHWL and 827,411 CY of beach-compatible sand would be installed to account for background erosion sand losses for a combined total of 950,000 CY. The background erosion sand loss would be placed at the same time as the disaster-related sand. This project would minimize the need for future renourishments since it would replace sand up to the full engineered design template.

FEMA has prepared a draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) to a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared by U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE). An alternatives analysis was performed, which included the evaluation of the proposed action, and the no action alternative. The draft SEA is available for public comment and can be viewed on FEMA's and Lee County's websites at the following locations:

FEMA Website Location:

<https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/environmental-historic/nepa/supplemental-environmental-15>

Florida's Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) Website Location:

www.floridadisaster.org/globalassets/20231119-pa-4673-00284-pn699821-sea.pdf

Lee County's Website Location:

<https://www.leegov.com/hurricane/ian>

A hardcopy of the draft SEA is available for review at the following locations: Lee County Community Development and Public Works Building located at 1500 Monroe Street, Fort Myers, FL 33901 (M-F 8am-5pm); Lovers Key State Park's Visitor Center at 8700 Estero Boulevard, Bonita Springs, FL 33931 (W-F 10am-1pm); City of Bonita Springs' Town Hall at 9101 Bonita Beach Road, Bonita Springs, FL 34134 (M-F 8am-5pm).

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) requires federal agencies to consult with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for effects to federally listed threatened and endangered species. Both existing Programmatic Biological Opinions with USFWS and NMFS and project specific Biological Opinions were utilized to minimize impacts to listed species by applying appropriate terms and conditions.

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires federal agencies to take into account the effect of their undertakings on historic properties. FEMA consulted with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and received concurrence for a determination of *No Historic Properties Effectuated*. Tribal consultation letters were submitted to six federally recognized tribes with vested interest in Lee County, Florida. No objections were received regarding the proposed work.

Presidential Executive Orders 11988 and 11990 require that all federal actions in or affecting the floodplain or wetlands be reviewed for opportunities to relocate and evaluated for social, economic, historical, environmental, legal, and safety considerations. Lovers Key and Bonita Beach is located within a special flood hazard area, per Lee County Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) #12071C0569G, 12071C0588G, and 12071C0651G, dated November 17, 2022. The beaches are functionally dependent facility that provides open space uses for recreational and habitat for wildlife in addition to providing a higher level of protection to adjacent properties. If no action is taken to replenish the beach to maintain profile, Lovers Key and Bonita Beach would be vulnerable to higher wave action and erosion. In addition, the area would suffer economic and social losses.

This will serve as the final public notice regarding the above-described action funded by the FEMA PA program. Interested persons may obtain information about these actions by writing to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region 4, 3005 Chamblee Tucker Road, Atlanta, Georgia 30341, or by emailing FEMA-R4EHP-FLORIDA@fema.dhs.gov. Comments should be sent in writing with the subject line "PA 4673-00284, Lovers Key and Bonita Beach Nourishment" at the above address within 15 days of the date of this notice.