



FEMA

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

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
for the
LITTLE BAYOU CASTINE DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS
MANDEVILLE, ST. TAMMANY PARISH, LOUISIANA
PROJECT NUMBER 1603-0332
FEMA-1603-DR-LA

BACKGROUND

Hurricane Katrina, a Category 4 hurricane with a storm surge above normal high tide levels, moved across the Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama Gulf Coasts on August 29, 2005. With several pipes and ditches being undersized for the Little Bayou Castine watershed, multiple modifications have been identified to help reduce frequent flooding problems in the area subdivisions in St. Tammany Parish. The project area is roughly bounded by LA Highway 1088 at the northeastern most extent, Sout Street to the east, Labarre Street to the south, and Garon Drive to the west in Mandeville, Louisiana, and includes approximately 650 homes in the Little Bayou Castine drainage basin.

In accordance with 44 CFR Part 10, FEMA 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 drainage improvements and determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

The need for the proposed action is to effectively alleviate major drainage and flooding problems experienced within residential subdivisions in the Little Bayou Castine drainage basin. Presently, undersized pipes and ditches cannot handle the volume of water that frequently inundates the watershed during storm events. The increased run-off impacts the drainage in the project area along Little Bayou Castine and surrounding areas. If left unprotected, future storm events have the potential to jeopardize the well-being of the people of St. Tammany Parish and repeatedly damage homes and property in this area. The alternatives considered include: 1) No Action and 2) Little Bayou Castine Drainage Improvements (Proposed Action).

The proposed action is to improve drainage in the headwaters of Little Bayou Castine by expanding the capacity of undersized culverts and ditches within the project area as well as constructing a 5-acre detention pond and broad-crested weir that will temporarily store storm runoff and help to regulate the release of excess water back into the watershed, thereby decreasing repetitive flood damage. Additionally, channel improvements are proposed for the upper stretch of Little Bayou Castine and Woodlawn Subdivision Ditch.

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 applicant is required to comply with all federal, state, and local laws, EOs, and regulations. Failure to do so will jeopardize federal funding.
- Implement construction Best Management Practices (BMPs); install silt fences/straw bales to reduce downslope sedimentation. Area soils must be covered and/or wetted during construction.
- If fill is stored on site as part of unit installation or removal, the contractor is required to appropriately cover it.
- Construction contractor is required to obtain applicable Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (LPDES) permit, and implement stormwater pollution prevention plan.
- The applicant is required to coordinate with the local floodplain administrator regarding floodplain permit(s) prior to the start of any activities. 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.
- New construction must be compliant with current codes and standards.
- The project area must be kept cleared so as not to interfere with floodplain functions.
- Per 44 CFR 9.11(d)(4), until a regulatory floodway is designated, no new construction, substantial improvements, or other development (including fill) shall be permitted within the base floodplain unless it is demonstrated that the cumulative effect of the proposed development, when combined with all other existing and anticipated development, will not increase the water surface elevation of the base flood more than one (1) foot at any point within the community. 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.

- 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.
 - Any changes or modifications to the proposed project will require a revised wetland jurisdictional determination. Off-site locations of activities such as borrow, disposals, haul- and detour roads, and work mobilization site developments may be subject to USACE regulatory requirements.
 - Applicant must coordinate with USACE at the New Orleans District prior to the start of construction to acquire any necessary permits. The applicant must comply with all conditions of the permits and forward copies of all correspondence to GOHSEP and FEMA for inclusion in the project files.
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- All precautions must be observed to control nonpoint source pollution from construction activities. LDEQ has stormwater general permits for construction areas equal to or greater than one (1) acre. The applicant must contact the LDEQ Water Permits Division at 225-219-9371 to determine if the proposed project requires a permit. Additional information may be obtained on the LDEQ website at <http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/2296/Default.aspx> or by contacting the LDEQ Water Permits Division at 225- 219-9371.
 - Erosion Control Devices (ECD's) must be used and maintained extensively to prevent any potential direct or indirect adverse impacts to nearby wetland areas per the CWA and EO 11990. Any adverse impacts to adjacent wetlands resulting from the construction of this project will jeopardize receipt of federal funding.
 - If any solid or hazardous wastes, or soils and/or groundwater contaminated with hazardous constituents are encountered during the project, notification to LDEQ's Single-Point-of-Contact (SPOC) at 225-219-3640 is required. Additionally, precautions must be taken to protect workers from these hazardous constituents.
 - The contractor must observe all precautions to protect the groundwater of the region.
 - The applicant is responsible for coordinating with and obtaining any required permit(s) from the LDNR Coastal Management Division prior to initiating work. The applicant shall comply with all conditions of the required permit. 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.
 - Vehicle operation times would be kept to a minimum. Area soils must be covered and/or wetted during construction to minimize dust.
 - Additional information may be obtained on the LDEQ website at <http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/2296/Default.aspx> or by contacting the LDEQ Water Permits Division at 225- 219-9371.

- If human bone or unmarked grave(s) are present within the project area, compliance with the Louisiana Unmarked Human Burial Sites Preservation Act (R.S. 8:671 et seq.) is required. The applicant shall notify the law enforcement agency of the jurisdiction where the remains are located within twenty-four 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. (Louisiana Unmarked Human Burial Sites Preservation Act).
- 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 their, GOSHEP State Applicant Liaison and Hazard Mitigation Assistance contacts at FEMA, who will in turn contact FEMA Historic Preservation (HP) staff. The applicant will not proceed with work until FEMA HP completes consultation with the SHPO, and others as appropriate (Inadvertent Discovery Clause).
- Unusable equipment, debris and material shall be disposed of in an approved manner and location. In the event significant items (or evidence thereof) are discovered during implementation of the project applicant shall handle, manage, and dispose of petroleum products, hazardous materials and/or toxic waste in accordance to the requirements and to the satisfaction of the governing local, state and federal agencies. Applicant is responsible for acquiring LDEQ permits for the temporary debris staging and reduction sites (TDSRS) associated with this project prior to project closeout. Failure to provide FEMA with LDEQ approval may jeopardize project funding eligibility.
- St. Tammany Parish limits noise levels by receiving land use in residential, public, commercial, and industrial areas to decibel levels of 60 during the “daytime” hours of 7 AM to 10 PM. Construction activities should be limited to this schedule on weekdays. Mitigation and abatement measures will be required to reduce the noise levels to a range that would be considered acceptable.
- To minimize worker and public health and safety risks from project construction and closure, all construction and closure work must be done using qualified personnel trained in the proper use of construction equipment, including all appropriate safety precautions. Additionally, all activities must be conducted in a safe manner in accordance with the standards specified in OSHA regulations and the USACE safety manual.
- The contractor must post appropriate signage and fencing to minimize potential adverse public safety concerns, and to protect nearby residents from vehicular traffic.
- Appropriate signage and barriers must be in place prior to construction activities in order to alert pedestrians and motorists of project activities and traffic pattern changes.

- The contractor must implement traffic control measures, as necessary.
- If hazardous materials are unexpectedly encountered in the project area during the proposed construction operations, appropriate measures for the proper assessment, remediation, management and disposal of the contamination would be initiated in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations. The contractor would be required to take appropriate measures to prevent, minimize, and control the spill of hazardous materials in the construction area.
- The LDNR Office of Conservation should be contacted at 225-342-5540 if any unregistered wells of any type are encountered during construction work.
- For pipelines and other underground hazards, Louisiana One Call should be contacted at 800-272-3020.

CONCLUSIONS

Construction of the proposed improvements at the proposed location was analyzed based on the studies, consultations, and reviews undertaken as reported in this draft EA. The findings of this EA conclude that the proposed action at the proposed site would result in no significant adverse impacts to geology, groundwater, floodplains, public health and safety, hazardous materials, socioeconomic resources, environmental justice, or cultural resources.

During project construction, short-term impacts to soils, surface water, transportation, air quality, and noise are anticipated and conditions have been incorporated to mitigate and minimize the effects. Project short-term adverse impacts would be mitigated using BMPs, such as silt fences, proper vehicle and equipment maintenance, and appropriate signage. No long-term adverse impacts are anticipated from the proposed project. Therefore, FEMA presently finds the proposed action meets the requirements for a FONSI under NEPA and the preparation of an EIS will not be required. If new information is received that indicates there may be significant adverse effects, then FEMA would revise the findings and issue a second public notice, for additional comments. However, if there are no changes, this Draft EA will become the Final EA.

APPROVALS



8/31/15

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

Date



Digitally signed by THOMAS M WOMACK
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Thomas M. (Mike) Womack
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Date