

APPENDIX B
Correspondence





December 23, 2008

Bluebonnet Regional Branch Library
9200 Bluebonnet Boulevard
Baton Rouge, LA 70810

RE: Draft Environmental Assessment for the Alternative Housing Pilot Program
Hidden Cove Group Housing Site, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana

Dear Librarian:

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requests that your library make available to the public the enclosed, *Draft Environmental Assessment for the Alternative Housing Pilot Program, Hidden Cove Group Housing Site, Baton Rouge, Louisiana*, for a 15-day public review period. Please place a copy of this letter and the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) in a location that facilitates public review. The public comment period begins on December 29, 2008 and all comments must be received no later than January 12, 2009.

As part of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and its implementing regulations 40 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) Part 1500 and 44 C.F.R. Part 10, the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) has prepared a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the environmental consequences of providing permanent housing to displaced residents of Louisiana, specifically East Baton Rouge Parish by the Alternative Housing Pilot Program (AHPP). Through FEMA funding, the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) has applied for FEMA funding under the AHPP to provide both temporary and permanent housing solutions for eligible applicant families displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. This draft EA analyzes the no action and the proposed action alternatives. The proposed action alternative consists of the construction of permanent AHPP housing on a previously developed 20-acre plot of land in south Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana. The LRA proposes to utilize AHPP funding to construct 42 single-family, permanent housing units within the Hidden Cove Subdivision located south of Gardere Lane, north of Nicholson Drive, and west of GSRI Road.

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Recognizing the extensive and complex housing challenges facing victims and communities as a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and acknowledging the limitations on FEMA ordinary statutory authority to provide non-temporary housing solutions, Congress appropriated funds to the Department of Homeland Security to support alternative housing pilot programs (Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2006, P.L. 109-234). The AHPP represents a one-time exception to FEMA's existing authority under the Stafford Act, which legally binds FEMA to a temporary housing mission reliant primarily on mobile homes and manufactured homes, by providing an opportunity to explore, implement, and evaluate innovative approaches to housing solutions, and to address ongoing housing challenges created by the 2005 hurricane season in the State of Louisiana, especially the southernmost parishes.

Based on the NEPA analysis, FEMA has determined that this draft EA and the associated draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) fully and accurately describes the impacts to the human and natural environment.

The enclosed document is also available to the public by downloading from FEMA's website at <http://www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/envdocuments/ea-region6.shtm>. Please send all comments to Cynthia Teeter by FAX: (504) 762-2670 or email at Cynthia.Teeter@dhs.gov.

I appreciate your assistance with our efforts to invite public involvement in our decision-making process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Denise Rousseau Ford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

Denise Rousseau Ford
Project Manager

enclosures

RE: 80420001s



December 23, 2008

East Baton Rouge Main Library
7711 Goodwood Boulevard
Baton Rouge, LA 70806

RE: Draft Environmental Assessment for the Alternative Housing Pilot Program
Hidden Cove Group Housing Site, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana

Dear Librarian:

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East Baton Rouge Main Library
December 23, 2008
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Denise Rousseau Ford
Project Manager

enclosures

RE: 80420001s



FEMA

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Federal Emergency Management Agency
FEMA-1603/1607-DR-LA
Louisiana Transitional Recovery Office
1250 Poydras Street, 14th Floor
New Orleans, LA 70113

December 23, 2008

Mr. Scott Hutcheson
State Historic Preservation Officer
Office of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
Post Office Box 44247
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

RE: Section 106 Review Consultation, Hurricanes Rita and Katrina

Undertaking: Construction of Alternate Housing Pilot Program Housing, Hidden Cove, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana

Determination: No Historic Properties Affected

Dear Mr. Hutcheson:

Recognizing the extensive and complex housing challenges facing victims and communities as a result of the 2005 hurricane season and acknowledging the limitations on FEMA's ordinary statutory authority to provide non-temporary housing solutions, Congress appropriated funds to the Department of Homeland Security to support alternative housing pilot programs (Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2006, Public Law 109-234). The AHPP represents a one-time exception to FEMA's existing authority under the Stafford Act, which legally binds FEMA to a temporary housing mission reliant primarily on travel trailers and manufactured homes, by providing an opportunity to explore, implement, and evaluate innovative approaches to housing solutions, and to address ongoing housing challenges created by the 2005 hurricane season in the U.S. Gulf Coast region, including the State of Louisiana and East Baton Rouge Parish. Presently there are 967 mobile homes, 6,112 manufactured housing, and 334 park model houses that are still occupied by residents displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. An additional 4,225 people are currently receiving rental assistance. Consequently, there maintains a need to provide a permanent housing solution.

FEMA is initiating Section 106 review in accordance with the Programmatic Agreement between FEMA, the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), the Louisiana Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (LOHSEP) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) dated December 3, 2004. The Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) applied for federal funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the construction of the Hidden Cove, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana Alternative Housing Pilot Program (AHPP) Group Housing Project. The LRA proposes to utilize AHPP funding to construct new residential housing comprised of 42 single-family, permanent housing units within a 20-acre plot of land in south Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana (Undertaking). The proposed AHPP units are designed in the Louisiana Cottage-style and would consist of a mixture of units

with living areas ranging from 684 square feet to 1,212 square feet. Project activities would include minimal grading, the tie-in of utilities to the cottages from existing lot site utilities, and the construction of driveways.

The proposed project site is located south of Gardere Lane, north of Nicholson Drive, and west of GSRI Road (Figure 1). The proposed site is bounded to the east and north by residential communities, to the south by vacant land and agricultural fields, and to the west by a city park facility. Access to the proposed development would be from Pascagoula Drive. A conceptual site plan for the project is provided in Figure 2. The proposed project area consists of previously disturbed land, which has been cleared and is only partially re-vegetated. The house lots upon which the AHPP cottages will be constructed are located in a previously developed subdivision that has been cleared, graded and has had roads, water, sewer and electric utilities installed.

A records search for previously reported sites and cultural resources surveys within one-mile of the proposed project area was conducted at the Louisiana Division of Archaeology in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The records search revealed no surveys had been completed within the boundaries of the proposed project area, however, one recorded archaeological site is within one-mile of it. The Longwood Plantation site 16EBR41 was first investigated by George Castille in 1976, although no report was submitted. Later investigations by the National Park Service (NPS) in 1984 and Surveys Unlimited Research Associates Inc., (SURA) in 1998 reported the site as being the remains of a sugar plantation dating from the 1780s to the 20th century (Jones, *et al* 1998). The site was recommended for NRHP eligibility by the NPS survey as well as the SURA survey (NPS 1984). Site 16EBR41 would not be impacted by the proposed project.

A site visit was conducted on December 15, 2008 by a Secretary of Interior qualified archeologist. It was noted that the landscape was highly disturbed in the process of the subdivision construction. No historic structures or other cultural resources were observed on the properties or in the immediate vicinity. If cultural resources ever were located on the proposed project property they were likely disturbed by the previous development episode. The likelihood of the ground disturbance required by the proposed action to impact intact cultural resources is minimal.

In the event that archaeological deposits, including but not limited to any Native American pottery, stone tools, historic artifacts or human remains, are uncovered during the undertaking, the project would be halted. The contractor would stop all work immediately in the vicinity of the discovery and take reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm to the finds. All archaeological findings would be secured and access to the sensitive area restricted. The contractor would inform FEMA immediately and FEMA would consult with the SHPO or THPO and interested tribes. Work in sensitive areas would not resume until consultation is completed and appropriate measures have been taken to ensure that the project is in compliance with the NHPA. As a result no impacts to cultural resources are expected.

Gulf South Research Corporation (GSRC) has been retained by FEMA to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed project. In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, GSRC requests that your agency review the proposed project and FEMA requests concurrence with its finding of "No Historic Properties Affected". If you have any

questions or need additional information, please contact Cynthia Teeter with FEMA by email Cynthia.Teeter@dhs.gov, or by Fax: (504) 762-2670.

Sincerely,



for

Cynthia Teeter
FEMA Deputy Environmental Liaison Officer
FEMA/State Transitional Recovery Office
1250 Poydras
New Orleans, LA 70113

Sources cited:

Jones, D., S., M. Shuman, T. Wells and B. Goodwin

1998 *Cultural Resources Survey of a Proposed Pipeline in Ascension, East Baton Rouge, Iberville, St. James and West Baton Rouge Parishes, Louisiana*. Surveys Unlimited Research Associates. Submitted to the Exxon Pipeline Company, Houston, Texas.

National Park Service

1984 *Mississippi River Cultural Resources Survey: A Comprehensive Study: Phase I Component B: Cultural Resources Site Inventory*. Denver Service Center, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. Submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District.

The SHPO Division of Archaeology reviewer concurs with the finding of **No Historic Properties Affected** for as a result of this Undertaking.

Division of Archaeology Reviewer

Date

The SHPO Division of Historic Preservation reviewer concurs with the finding of **No Historic Properties Affected** as a result of this Undertaking.

Division of Historic Preservation Reviewer

Date

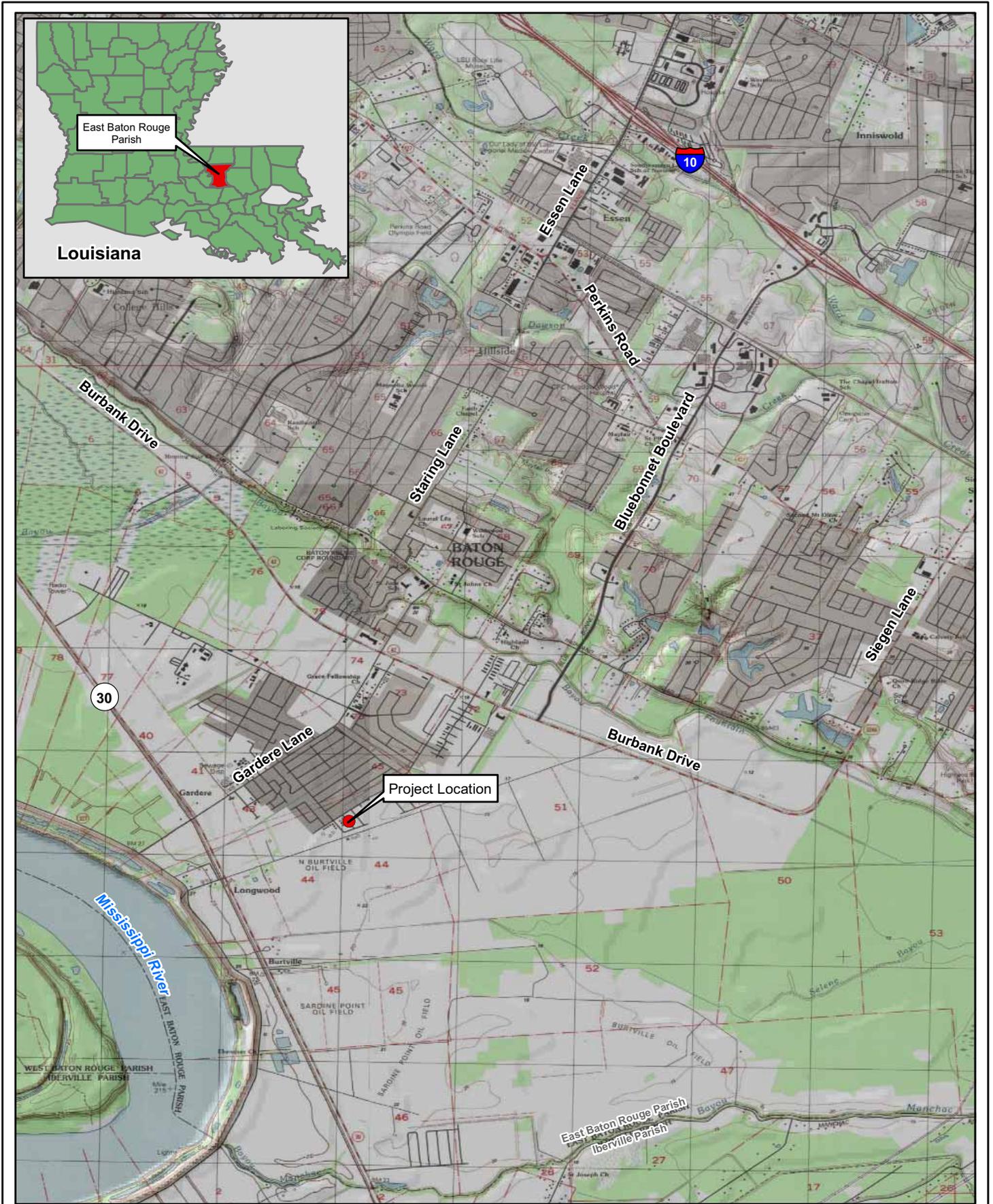


Figure 1: Baton Rouge - Hidden Cove AHPP Vicinity Map



Figure 2: Baton Rouge - Hidden Cove AHPP Proposed Site Map