

# Helping Preserve Florida's Environmental and Historical Resources

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**ORLANDO, Fla.** – Preserving and protecting nature and history don't immediately come to mind when people think of FEMA, but funding disaster recovery efforts may affect environmental and historical resources.

Following Hurricane Irma's destructive path across Florida in September 2017, FEMA's Office of Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation—EHP—has been working to ensure the state's rich natural and cultural resources are taken into consideration as it recovers. This team evaluates impacts on FEMA-funded recovery projects involving historic structures, archaeological resources, wetlands, floodplains, threatened or endangered species as well as air and water quality.

EHP works with the state and locals to ensure compliance with laws and executive orders to assist recovery efforts and avoid, minimize or mitigate damage to these resources. Several laws that EHP routinely complies with include the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, the Endangered Species Act and the Clean Water Act.

To provide the most effective service to disaster survivors, EHP collaborates with agencies such as the [Florida Division of Historical Resources](#), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory Division to name a few.

One of Florida's success stories involves Miami's [Vizcaya Museum and Gardens](#), a National Historic Landmark listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Stronger building codes—enforced as a result of 1992's devastating Hurricane Andrew—required replacing the main building's 1980s glass canopy.

Vizcaya Museum and Gardens qualified for a state and FEMA grant to replace the canopy with a stronger design so it met the new building codes. Modifying important structural elements like canopies can drastically alter a building's historic integrity as well as possibly expose hazardous materials during



construction.

Before FEMA approved the \$2.8 million project, EHP reviewed the canopy replacement to ensure it maintained the authenticity of the building's historic identity and met all environmental laws.

Construction was completed in 2012 and Vizcaya Museum and Gardens now has a stronger canopy—designed to withstand winds up to 146 mph—that also preserves its historic integrity. Hurricane Irma validated its strength in 2017 when it successfully withstood all damage.

For information, visit [www.FEMA.gov/IrmaFL](http://www.FEMA.gov/IrmaFL), or follow us [@FEMARegion4 on Twitter](https://twitter.com/FEMARegion4) and on [FEMA's Facebook page](#).

*FEMA's mission: Helping people before, during and after disasters.*

*Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 800-462-7585.*

*FEMA's temporary housing assistance and grants for public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, applicants who receive SBA loan applications must submit them to SBA to be eligible for assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.*

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