



Draft Environmental Assessment

Levee Road Temporary Housing Site

Pemiscot County, Missouri

FEMA-1635-DR-MO

April 2006

FEMA

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
9221 Ward Parkway, Suite 300
Kansas City, Missouri 64114-3372

**Draft Environmental Assessment
Emergency Temporary Housing
Severe Storms and Tornadoes
FEMA-1635-DR-MO**

A. Project Name: Levee Road Emergency Temporary Housing Site

B. Environmental Assessment

This Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) documents the results of a study of the proposed project's potential environmental impacts and has been prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969; the President's Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508); and FEMA's regulations implementing NEPA (44 CFR 10.9). Based on the evaluation described herein, FEMA has concluded that the proposed project would not have significant adverse environmental consequences.

C. Purpose and Need:

On April 2, 2006 a series of tornadoes moved across eastern Arkansas, southeastern Missouri and northwest Tennessee. In total five (5) F3 tornadoes touched down across this region. A category F3 tornado, with wind of 158-206 mph, moved across the southern half of Caruthersville, Missouri and damaged almost every home in its path before dissipating at the Mississippi River.

President Bush declared a major disaster for Pemiscot County, Missouri due to damages from these severe storms and tornadoes, and signed a disaster declaration (FEMA-1635-DR-MO) on April 5, 2006, authorizing the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide federal assistance in designated areas of Missouri. Displaced individuals and families are currently living in shelters and other dispersed temporary housing locations; therefore, there is a need to expedite the selection and development process where temporary housing will be built to minimize their time spent in the shelters and other dispersed locations.

FEMA proposes to administer federal disaster assistance funds per the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 USC 5121-5206, as amended (Stafford Act). Section 408 of the Stafford Act authorizes FEMA's Individual Assistance Program to provide emergency temporary housing for disaster victims whose homes are uninhabitable. FEMA has identified the need to provide temporary housing for residents in Caruthersville, Pemiscot County, Missouri where the proposed project is located and proposes to fund an emergency temporary housing project.

D. Project Alternatives:

NEPA requires the investigation and evaluation of reasonable project alternatives as part of the project environmental review process. Two alternatives are addressed in this DEA: the No Action Alternative, where FEMA would not build temporary housing, and the Proposed Action, where FEMA would build temporary housing in Caruthersville, Pemiscot County, Missouri.

Alternative 1- No Action Alternative:

Under the No Action Alternative, FEMA would not fund the proposed project. Most tornado victims would stay with their families and friends or in schools, churches, shelters, motels or other locations until they can find other housing. This would result in further economic and personal hardships for affected residents, disrupt school attendance and the school system, and further strain the county social and economic infrastructure.

Alternative 2 – Build Temporary Housing (Proposed Action):

The Proposed Action provides group housing for people displaced by the severe storms and tornados in the Caruthersville vicinity of Pemiscot County, Missouri. With this alternative, disaster victims will be temporarily relocated to a group housing site, and housed in manufactured housing (mobile homes). Under the Proposed Action Alternative between 100 and 120 mobile homes would be placed on the site. When the temporary housing need has ended, FEMA expects that the mobile homes would be hauled from the site, to suitable locations elsewhere (to be determined on a case-by-case basis). The site would then be seeded and restored to previous conditions and/or used by the property owner in a manner consistent with its zoning classification.

E. Project Location:

The proposed site is located at the intersection of East 9th Street and Maple Street in Caruthersville, Pemiscot County, Missouri (Figures 1 and 2). The site is bordered on the west by Maple Street, on the south by East 9th Street and on the north and east by East 7th Street. On the northeast corner of Maple Street and East 7th Street is a 5-acre gravel lot that will be used as a temporary staging and distribution area for the mobile homes. A second 5-acre lot, located at the Caruthersville Municipal Airport, will also be used for staging.

F. Site Description:

The group housing site consists of approximately 15 acres of land owned by Mr. Earl Bullington of Caruthersville, Missouri. The site is bordered on the west by Maple Street, on the south by East 9th Street and on the east and north by East 7th Street. The terrain is essentially flat and ground cover consists of non-native grasses. In the past the property has been used for agricultural activities. Currently the site is lying fallow. The adjoining

properties, to the north, south and west are privately held residential lots. The Mississippi River levee is located on the east side of East 7th Street.

The 5 acre staging area site is located northeast of the proposed group site. The site is bounded on the south by East 7th Street and currently serves as the over-flow and semi-truck parking lot for the Casino Aztec. A second 5-acre lot, located at the Caruthersville Municipal Airport, will also be used for staging. No earth disturbing activities are anticipated at either staging area.

G. Project Description:

The Proposed Alternative would involve the construction of a temporary mobile home group site (hereafter “the Site”) which would accommodate between 100 and 120 mobile homes. At this time, Site occupancy is not expected to exceed 18 months.

All new utilities would be installed, including connecting potable water, storm sewer, sanitary sewer, telephone and electricity from the existing infrastructure. The city’s utility infrastructure has the capacity to handle the temporary increase in services and flow rates. Sanitary sewer and waterlines will be buried underground with a minimum of 3-foot of cover. One new access road off Maple Street would be built for residents’ ingress and egress. The site would be prepped by mowing the grass and then covering the area with geotechnical grade fabric. Rock would be laid over the top of the fabric to form the interior roadways and trailer pads. Storm water runoff would be conveyed through the city stormwater system. A safety fence would also be installed and maintained around the Site perimeter during construction.

When the temporary housing need has ended, FEMA expects that the mobile homes would be hauled from the site, to suitable locations elsewhere (to be determined on a case-by-case basis). The Site would then be seeded and restored to previous conditions and/or used by the landowner in a manner consistent with county zoning classification.

H. Site Selection Process:

NEPA requires investigation and evaluation of reasonable project alternatives as part of the project environmental review process. In order to expedite the site selection process, FEMA’s contractors review available aerial photos and maps, conduct site reconnaissance field surveys, and contact state and local officials to identify potential sites. Factors considered in choosing a site include: site topography, property owner willingness, past land use, if it was already planned for development, access to existing utilities, and engineering feasibility.

I. Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences:

In order to meet the proposed purpose and need of timely delivery of emergency temporary housing, FEMA conducted an expedited environmental review process to identify environmental issues that need addressing. The environmental review process included a field reconnaissance visit of the proposed project site, as well as background research, and expedited agency consultation. The field reconnaissance visit was conducted on April 8, 2006. Background research consisted of a review of wetlands maps, census statistics, FEMA floodplain maps, hazardous materials databases, archaeological and historic structures databases, threatened and endangered species information, soil surveys, and other available information. Expedited agency consultation through verbal and written communications with the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service produced “No Effect” determination letters from each agency.

The following matrix summarizes the results of the environmental review process (Table 1). Potential environmental impacts that were found to be negligible are not evaluated further. Resource areas that have the potential for impacts of minor, moderate, or major intensity are further developed in the following Section J. Definitions of the impact intensity are described below:

Negligible: The resource area (e.g., geology) would not be affected, or changes would be either non-detectable or if detected, would have effects that would be slight and local. Impacts would be well below regulatory standards, as applicable.

Minor: Changes to the resource would be measurable, although the changes would be small and localized. Impacts would be within or below regulatory standards, as applicable. Mitigation measures would reduce any potential adverse effects.

Moderate: Changes to the resource would be measurable and have both localized and regional scale impacts. Impacts would be within or below regulatory standards, but historical conditions are being altered on a short-term basis. Mitigation measures would be necessary and the measures would reduce any potential adverse effects.

Major: Changes would be readily measurable and would have substantial consequences on a local and regional level. Impacts would exceed regulatory standards. Mitigation measures to offset the adverse effects would be required to reduce impacts, though long-term changes to the resource would be expected.

Table 1. Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences Matrix

Resource Area	Impact Intensity				Mitigation	Agency Coordination / Permits	Comments
	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major			
Geology and Soils	X				Implement construction BMPs, install silt fences/straw bales to reduce sedimentation.		
Hydrology and Floodplains (Executive Order 11988)	X						Flood Insurance Rate Maps were reviewed on FEMA's website. The site is located outside the 100-year floodplain.
Wetlands (Executive Order 11990)	X						There are no jurisdictional wetlands in the project area. See Section J.
Water Quality		X			Implement construction BMPs, install silt fences/straw bales to reduce sedimentation. Contractor to implement requirements of NPDES stormwater discharge permit.	NPDES stormwater permit or waiver to be obtained by Contractor	
Air Quality		x			Vehicle operation times would be kept to a minimum. Area soils would be covered and/or wetted during construction to minimize dust. Rock cover for roads and housing pads would be wetted and/or treated periodically to minimize dust particles.		City airshed is in attainment for criteria pollutants per the Clean Air Act. See Section J.
Vegetation and Wildlife	X						The Site will be restored to its original condition after 18 months.
Threatened and Endangered Species (Endangered Species Act Section 7)	X					USFWS determination of "No Effect" received (4/12/06).	
Cultural Resources (National Historic Preservation Act Section 106)	X					SHPO determination of "No Effect" received on (04/17/06).	
Socioeconomics / Recreation	x						The site will be restored to its original condition after the trailers are removed.
Environmental Justice (Executive Order 12898)	x						
Noise		X					See Section J.
Safety and Security	X				Orange safety fences would be placed around the perimeter of the site during construction.		

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Hazardous Materials and Toxic Wastes	X				Contractor will coordinate with City traffic engineer to ensure traffic infrastructure can service the increased traffic volume.	Contractor will contact City Traffic Engineer.	Hazardous materials database search queried per ASTM standards on April 16, 2006. No sites of concern were identified by the database search. No environmental conditions of concern observed during field reconnaissance. See Section J.
Traffic and Transportation		X					

J. Additional Potential Impact Analysis:

Water Quality

Stormwater flows may enter the site via rainfall and exit the site via the city sewer system and natural drainageways, which eventually drain into the Mississippi River. In order to minimize pollutants from entering the Mississippi River watershed, the contractor would be required to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) and develop a construction plan that meets the Missouri Department of Natural Resources specifications for stormwater discharge, or receive a waiver. Stormwater runoff would be treated before entering the Mississippi River because it would be conveyed through the city stormwater sewer system.

Air Quality

The proposed project would include activities that would produce a minor, temporary, localized in vehicle emissions and dust particles. Tractor-trailers would transport manufactured trailer homes to the site. Construction equipment would be required for site preparation. While such equipment use would temporarily increase emissions, no long term air quality impacts are anticipated. Federal or state air quality attainment levels would not likely be exceeded.

Roads would be constructed of permeable asphalt like millings, gravel, or similar material to reduce airborne particles. Periodic wetting during construction and home removal would reduce fugitive dust. These mitigation measures would help reduce air quality impacts on asthmatics, seniors and other sensitive residents.

Noise

Impacts from noise as a result of the project would be minor. Noise levels within the project area would increase during construction of the project due to construction equipment. Construction noise impacts would be short-term and limited to the duration of construction activities (about 21 days). Due to the urgency of the situation, construction could occur on a 24-hour schedule until the Site is completed.

Certain land uses, facilities, and people associated with noise levels are more sensitive to a given level of noise than other uses. Such “sensitive receptors” can include schools, churches, hospitals, retirement homes. There are no noise “sensitive receptors” located within ¼ mile of the project area. Noise impacts will be reduced to the maximum extent possible. If necessary, noise reduction measures would be instituted. These measures could include (1) restricting the 24-hour construction schedule; (2) using a 7 A.M. to 7 P.M. construction schedule; (3) completing construction closest to the sensitive receptor first, and/or (4) completing noisier activities during the day if using a 24-hour schedule.

Traffic and Transportation

Currently, the roads around the project site are paved two-lane roadways without paved shoulders. No traffic lights are located on any of the roadways within the project area. Traffic within the general project area would increase due to the ingress and egress of construction equipment. This traffic impact would be short-term and limited to the duration of construction. Traffic volumes would also increase due to the Site residents. These traffic impacts would short-term and limited to the duration of the need for temporary housing at the site. Due to the increased traffic volume, the contractor would need to work with the City Traffic Engineer to assure that the local level of service on the roadway remains adequate.

Hazardous/toxic Materials

A Phase I ESA and EDR Report were prepared for the target property. No hazardous materials sites were found at or within ½ mile radius of the proposed project.

No drinking water wells would be installed because the Site would be connected to the city water supply through existing infrastructure.

Although no hazardous materials were found on-site, if any are found between start of construction and final Site closure, all hazardous materials shall be either remediated, abated, or disposed of as appropriate, and otherwise handled in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations. Alternatively, the site could be abandoned in view of finding another site that better meets the identified project purpose and need.

K. Public Involvement:

Due to the emergency nature of this action, the public comment period will be brief – April 20, 2006 to April 22, 2006. A Public Notice (Attachment 1) will be published in the Democrat-Argus on April 19, 2006 and in the Steele Enterprise on April 20, 2006. The Draft EA can be viewed and downloaded from FEMA’s website at <http://www.fema.gov/ehp/docs.shtm> and is also available for public review at the Caruthersville City Hall, located at 200 West Third Street, Caruthersville, Missouri 63830; and the U.S. Post Office located at 300 Carleton, Caruthersville, Missouri 63830. The hours for City Hall are Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM; the hours for the U.S. Post Office are Monday through Friday from 8:45 AM to 4:30 PM and Saturday from 9:00 AM to 10:30 AM. If no substantive comments are received, the Draft EA will become final.

L. Figures:

Figure 1: Project Location

Figure 2: Aerial View of the Site

Figure 1
Location Map



Figure 2
Aerial Photograph



Attachment 1. Public Notice:

**FEMA PUBLIC NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
LEVEE ROAD TEMPORARY HOUSING SITE,
CARUTHERSVILLE, PEMISCOT COUNTY, MISSOURI**

Interested parties are hereby notified that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has prepared a Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) for a proposed mobile home site. The site would house disaster victims displaced by major home damage caused by the severe storms and tornados on April 2, 2006. A Presidential Disaster Declaration, FEMA-1635-DR-MO, was signed on April 5, 2006, for this event.

The proposed action includes developing an approximately 15-acre site (termed “Levee Road site”) for approximately 100 mobile home units. The project area is located north of East 9th Street, west of Maple Street and is bounded on the east and north by East 7th Street in Caruthersville, Pemiscot County, Missouri. Activities would include, where necessary, site grading, road construction, the placement of utilities (electricity, telephones, water, and sewer), and the transport and hook-up of mobile homes to the site. Per the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4371 *et seq.*), and associated environmental statutes, a DEA was written to evaluate the proposed action’s potential impacts on the human and natural environment. In order to meet the urgent need of tornado victims to find temporary housing, FEMA has conducted an expedited environmental review process to identify and address environmental issues. The DEA summarizes the purpose and need, site selection process, affected environment, and potential environmental consequences associated with the proposed action.

Due to the emergency nature of this action, the public comment period will be brief – April 20 to April 22, 2006. Written comments on the DEA can be faxed to FEMA’s Joint Field Office in Columbia at (573) 445-1072; and verbal comments will be accepted at (573) 446-3008 between 7:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. The DEA can be viewed and downloaded from FEMA’s website at <http://www.fema.gov/ehp/docs.shtm> and is also available for public review at the Caruthersville City Hall, located at 200 West Third Street, Caruthersville, Missouri 63830; and the U.S. Post Office located at 300 Carleton, Caruthersville, Missouri 63830. The hours for City Hall are Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM; the hours for the U.S. Post Office are Monday through Friday from 8:45 AM to 4:30 PM and Saturday from 9:00 AM to 10:30 AM. If no substantive comments are received, the Draft EA will become final and this initial Public Notice will also serve as the final Public Notice.

All other questions regarding disaster assistance or the availability of emergency housing should be directed to FEMA’s Teleregistration line at 800-621-3362.