

**Federal Emergency Management Agency
(FEMA)**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)
for
Relocation of Emerald Coast Utilities Authority's
Main Street Wastewater Treatment Plant
Escambia County, Florida
FEMA-1551-DR-FL**

Background

ECUA has applied to FEMA for assistance with a project for the MSWWTP in Pensacola, Escambia County, Florida. The already outdated WWTP was devastated by storm surge associated with Hurricane Ivan in September 2004. The MSWWTP was rendered inoperable for three days, resulting in the release of raw sewage into the adjacent neighborhoods and Pensacola Bay. FEMA's Public Assistance Program is considering providing funding as an Improved Project under Presidential Disaster Declaration FEMA-1551-DR-FL.

After careful consideration, ECUA has decided not to repair the Main Street Wastewater Treatment Plant (MSWWTP) in downtown Pensacola. Due to its advanced age and improvement limitations imposed by the existing site, the plant is unable to consistently treat incoming wastewater at required levels. Instead, they have determined that it is in the public's best interest to relocate the WWTP to an undeveloped 976-acre parcel at a new location in central Escambia County, located 25 miles north of the existing MSWWTP. The proposed project would also include the installation of approximately 24 miles of 16- to 48-inch diameter transmission mains. Three new regional lift stations would also be built to transport wastewater to the Proposed Alternative location. Treated wastewater would be reused by an industrial partner with the remainder being disposed of using upland spray irrigation and infiltration basins. The potential for the release of untreated sewage into downtown Pensacola would be eliminated and discharge of treated wastewater into Pensacola Bay would be terminated.

Finding

The purpose of the EA is to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the proposed relocation project, and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). In EA process FEMA evaluated the following alternatives: No Action Alternative, Repair in Place Alternative, and the Proposed Alternative.

Relocating the plant would have a beneficial effect on the environment by removing the threat of untreated sewage being released from the existing facility into downtown Pensacola. Elimination of ongoing point source and storm related sewage discharges into Pensacola Bay would occur as a result of the proposed action. Because of previous ecological alteration (conversion of native vegetation to monotypic pine plantation) and planned mitigation, the environmental consequences at the proposed project site would be minimal. Highly treated effluent would be reused for industrial purposes then disposed of through land application with insignificant impacts to water quality and aquatic resources. Anticipated environmental impacts would, to the extent practicable and as required by federal, state, and local statutes and regulations, be avoided, minimized, and offset (mitigated).

In accordance with 44 CFR Part 10.8 (d)(3)(x), FEMA has determined that the proposed alternative would not have significant individual or cumulative adverse effects when combined with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. No significant adverse impacts to geological and hydrological features; floodplains; wetlands and jurisdictional waters of the U.S.; water quality; air quality; vegetation; wildlife; state and federally listed threatened and endangered species; cultural resources; socioeconomic (including minority and low income populations); safety and security; and traffic and transportation would occur. No work would occur within identified units of the Coastal Barriers Resource Act. No unacceptable discharge of hazardous materials or toxic waste are planned or anticipated.

The Draft EA was made available to interested parties through publication on FEMA's website (www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/envdocuments/index.shtm) and by distribution to Pensacola Public Library and the ECUA Customer Service Building. Notification of availability of the Draft EA was published in the *Pensacola News Journal* newspaper on January 12 and 13, 2008. No substantive comments were received.

Conditions

The following is a summary of the project conditions included in the EA that must be met as part of implementing this proposed action alternative. These project conditions include industry standard Best Management Practices (BMPs) and demonstrated compliance with all applicable federal, state and local permits, regulations, etc.

EO 11990 (Wetlands)

Areas that would be impacted and located outside of maintained utility easements must be restored to natural grade; re-planted with native forest or herbaceous wetland vegetation; monitored and maintained for a minimum of five years or until they are deemed successful by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). The remaining wetland impacts would be mitigated for by enhancement of an existing wetland located at the Proposed Alternative site, east of the proposed facility location. This wetland would be enhanced via the removal of planted pine currently located in the wetland. The

enhanced wetland would be monitored and maintained for a minimum of five years or until they are deemed successful by the USACE and FDEP.

ESA (Threatened & Endangered Species)

1. Utilization of the Standard Protection Measures for the Eastern Indigo Snake and the Excavation Guidelines for gopher tortoises to minimize the occurrence of harm to both species during burrow excavation.
2. Monitoring of disturbed areas for exotic invasive plant species where wetland-associated white-topped pitcher plants will be lost. In the event that invasive species are found colonizing these disturbed areas, control and elimination measures would be required.
3. Development of a monitoring plan to evaluate effluent release for accumulation of pollutants and waste pharmaceuticals in surface waters, sediments and animal species; and to demonstrate there will not be any impact to the water quality of the Escambia River or its tributaries.

NHPA (Cultural and Historic Resources)

Monsanto Site (8ES1294) – The STOF THPO has requested that at least 36 cm of appropriate fill material be placed on top of existing access road to support banks and prevent ongoing erosion.

Clear Creek Tram (8ES3338) SHPO has requested that directional boring be used to avoid adverse effects to the site. If directional boring can not be utilized, a Phase II survey is required.

Moat Site (8ES953)

To minimize any adverse impact to the site the STOF has requested and all parties have concurred that the spray field irrigation system not be established in this area and the site be avoided. A 5-6 meter buffer zone must be maintained around the site. The STOF has also requested that engineering drawings be prepared showing the proposed buffer zone and that the STOF have a chance to review the drawings prior to any final determination.

Flat Brick Site (8ES3371)

To minimize any adverse impact to the site the STOF has requested and all parties have concurred that the spray field irrigation system not be established in this area and the site be avoided. A 5-6 meter buffer zone must be maintained around the site. The STOF has also requested that engineering drawings be prepared showing the proposed buffer zone and that the STOF have a chance to review the drawings prior to any final determination.


In the event the applicant has any changes to the proposed activity at the sites the applicant shall notify FEMA, SHPO and the STOF THPO in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Project-wide Conditions and Discovery Requirements of the EA. The Florida SHPO has requested that in the event there are any subsequent changes, alternations or expansion to the project area a new cultural resource survey

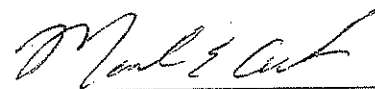
will be conducted by a professional archaeologist and the findings sent to the SHPO for review and comment

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the attached Environmental Assessment, coordination with the appropriate agencies, and adherence to the project conditions set forth in the EA, and in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA (44 CFR Parts 1500 through 1508) and FEMA regulations for environmental consideration pertaining to NEPA compliance (44 CFR Part 10), FEMA has determined that the proposed action will have no significant adverse impact on the quality of the biological or human environments. As a result of this FONSI, an EIS will not be prepared and the proposed project as described in the attached EA may proceed.

Approved:

 3/4/08
Richard Myers / Date
FEMA Environmental Liaison Officer

 3/4/08
Martin Altman / Date
FEMA Infrastructure Branch Chief