

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
FEMA Region 6
FEMA-1659-DR-NM
800 N. Loop 288
Denton, Texas 76209-3698



FEMA

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
EMERGENCY TEMPORARY HOUSING PROJECT
RINCON BAKER STREET EXTENSION TEMPORARY HOUSING SITE,
DONA ANA COUNTY, NEW MEXICO
*FEMA-1659-DR-NM***

As a result of damages from severe storms and flooding that began on July 26, 2006, two New Mexico counties – Dona Ana and Otero – were declared eligible for federal disaster assistance. The Town of Hatch, Dona Ana County, sustained the most damage. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was authorized under a Presidential disaster declaration (FEMA-1659-DR-NM) to provide Federal assistance to designated disaster areas in New Mexico. Section 408 of the Stafford Act authorizes FEMA's Individual Assistance (IA) Program to provide emergency temporary housing for disaster victims whose homes are uninhabitable. There are insufficient rental units available to house displaced disaster victims. The use of hotel rooms, shelters, or staying with family/friends is only appropriate for a very limited time period. In response to this need, FEMA is proposing to build emergency disaster group housing for residents in Dona Ana County, New Mexico.

In order to implement its IA Program in a timely and effective manner, FEMA proposed an expedited process to assess the potential environmental impacts of building emergency temporary housing for displaced disaster victims. An Environmental Assessment (EA), dated October 13, 2006 was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the President's Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and FEMA regulations for NEPA compliance (44 CFR Part 10). The EA's purpose is to analyze and document the proposed alternative's potential environmental impacts, serve as a vehicle to document compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The EA is hereby incorporated by reference.

The proposed site, known as Rincon Baker Street Extension, is located at the end of Baker and Harlan Streets. FEMA contractors have been tasked with constructing a new manufactured home park (hereafter the "Park") of approximately fifty (50) Manufactured Homes. The land would be leased by the General Service Administration. At this time, Park occupancy is expected to not exceed 18 months. New utilities would be installed, including connecting potable water and electrical service to existing infrastructure. The site construction will consist of 20 foot wide "chip and seal" asphalt roads, all unit pads will be leveled, compacted and attached to new utility connections. Sewer connections will be made through a gravity feed system to the existing municipal system. Water lines will be installed underground at a depth to prevent freezing and will be connected to the existing municipal water system. Electrical service will also be buried and attached to existing commercial electrical supplies. All units will be leveled, blocked and secured in accordance with existing regulations. Storm water runoff detention ponds will be provided to mitigate for the proposed impervious cover and to protect the downstream property owners. When the temporary housing need has ended, FEMA expects that the trailers would be hauled from the site, to suitable locations elsewhere (to be determined on case-by-case basis). The Park site would then be seeded and restored to previous conditions, to the extent practicable, and/or used by the landowner in a manner consistent with county zoning classification.

The public comment period for the Draft EA was from October 13th through 16th, 2006 with notice published in the Las Cruces Sun and on FEMA's web site at <http://www.fema.gov/ehp/docs.shtml>.

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FINDINGS

FEMA has made the following determinations from the information contained in the Rincon Baker Street Extension Temporary Housing Site EA:

The above described action will not result in any significant adverse impacts related to geology and soils; hydrology and floodplains; wetlands and jurisdictional waters of the U.S.; water quality; air quality; vegetation and wildlife; state and federally listed threatened and endangered species; cultural resources; socioeconomics (including minority and low income populations); safety and security; hazardous materials and toxic wastes; and traffic and transportation. The proposed alternative has been reviewed and, to the best of our knowledge, does not have the potential for significant cumulative effects when combined with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in accordance with 44 CFR Part 10.8 (d)(3)(x).

The following summarizes much of what is outlined in the mitigation column of Table 1 of the EA and are the conditions that must be met as part of implementing this proposed action alternative:

1. Construction contractor is required to obtain and comply with all applicable local, state and federal laws, ordinances and permits (or applicable waivers). This may include, but is not limited to, any required permits relevant to site development such as stormwater construction permits, New Mexico Department of Health permits, New Mexico Department of Environmental Quality permits, and meeting codes and standards for utility hookups, housing, and the National Fire Code.
2. Preparing (clearing and grading) of the proposed temporary emergency housing site will require removal of vegetation and may increase short-term soil erosion. Appropriate erosion control measures will be used during construction, including the use of best management practices (e.g., installation of silt fences and straw bales), to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation. If fill is stored on site, the contractor is required to appropriately cover it to prevent erosion.
3. In order to control stormwater runoff, the contractor will be required to design drainage features so that flows will not flood Park residents or surrounding properties during storm events. The drainage system will be required to meet local and state requirements, including the acquisition of easements if applicable.
4. To minimize dust particles, area soils, gravel for roads and housing pads would be wetted and/or treated periodically with a commercially available product approved for use in residential areas.
5. Any debris located on the project site would be removed and disposed of by the construction contractor prior to occupancy.
6. In accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, if unanticipated historic or cultural materials are discovered during construction, all construction activities shall immediately cease within 100 feet of the materials until their cultural affiliation and ultimate disposition are determined in consultation with the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office, FEMA Environmental Liaison Officer and other interested parties.
7. If necessary, the following noise reduction measures should be considered: (1) restricting the 24-hour schedule to the first two weeks of construction; (2) using a 7 A.M. to 7 P.M. construction schedule; (3) completing construction closest to adjoining residents first; and (4) completing noisier activities during the day if a 24-hour schedule is used.
8. If any hazardous materials are found during construction or Park occupation, all hazardous materials shall be remediated, abated, or disposed of as appropriate, and otherwise handled in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations.


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9. The contractor will post appropriate signage and fencing to minimize potential adverse public safety concerns. Appropriate signage and barriers should be in place prior to construction activities in order to alert pedestrians and motorists of project activities and traffic pattern changes.
10. No construction activities may take place on the site until clearance under Section 106 of the NHPA is obtained from the New Mexico SHPO office.
11. Once the temporary housing need has ended, the site would be seeded and restored to previous conditions to the extent practical and/or used by the landowner in a manner consistent with local zoning. This may include a requirement to use native species to revegetate the site. Informal consultation with state and federal resource agencies will ensure that the project does not adversely impact regional species diversity.

CONCLUSIONS

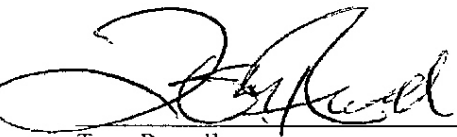
Based upon the incorporated EA, and in accordance with Presidential Executive Orders 12898 (Environmental Justice), 11988 (Floodplain Management), and 11990 (Wetland Protection), FEMA has determined that the proposed action implemented with the conditions and mitigation measures outlined above and in the EA will not have any significant adverse effects on the quality of the natural and human environment. I have determined that implementation of the proposed federal action by FEMA is in accordance with 42 CFR § 4332, Sect. 102(2) of NEPA and hereby approve this FONSI. An Environmental Impact Statement will not be required (44 CFR Part 10.8) and the proposed action alternative as described in the EA may proceed.

APPROVE:



Donald R. Fairley, REM
Environmental Liaison Officer
FEMA-1659-DR-NM

17 October 2006
Date



Tony Russell
Federal Coordinating Officer
FEMA-1659-DR-NM

10/17/2006
Date