



# Louisiana — Environmental & Historic Preservation

*A decade of progress through partnerships*

## Environmental and Historic Preservation

The Federal Emergency Management Agency’s **Environmental and Historic Preservation** (EHP) program is responsible for integrating environmental and historic preservation considerations into the agency’s mission of preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation.

Across Louisiana, environmental resources, cultural institutions and historic assets define communities and contribute to their well-being and unique character. Preserving the integrity of the natural and historic landscape has been a vital consideration in the recovery from hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

As disasters continue to challenge the Gulf Coast and communities grapple with issues of preparedness and sustainability, FEMA’s EHP team offers expertise to ensure both legal compliance and informed local, state, tribal and national planning.

FEMA’s EHP team in collaboration with local, state and federal partners has played a vital role in preserving and protecting the environment and the historic, cultural and tribal resources following hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

## Tribal Visits

FEMA works closely with federally-recognized tribal governments to identify areas of historic concern for FEMA-funded projects. In addition to monthly coordination meetings, numerous tribal governments, including the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, the Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana, the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana and the Seminole Tribe of Florida, have sent representatives to project locations across Louisiana as part of implementing the National Historic Preservation Act. Some of the historic resources visited include: Jackson Barracks, the Kingsley House Site, Fort Pike, Spanish Fort in Orleans Parish, Fort Jackson in Plaquemines Parish and the Bayou Yscloskey Site in St. Bernard Parish. The insight and coordination provided by the tribal governments has been invaluable in completing FEMA’s historic preservation responsibilities.



Seminole Tribe of Florida

## St. Roch Market

St. Roch Market, one of New Orleans’ iconic public markets, was constructed in 1875 and renovated by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1937. The building’s long, narrow, one-story form and prominent neighborhood location are characteristic features of the city’s historic market buildings. The community landmark suffered severe flood damage in Hurricane Katrina and remained closed for nearly a decade. Throughout the project, FEMA worked closely with the City of New Orleans and the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office to ensure the work met the design requirements and archeological monitoring conditions included in the FEMA grant. Following a **\$3.7 million** rehabilitation funded by HUD and FEMA, St Roch Market re-opened to the public in the Spring of 2015.



St. Roch Market – Post-Katrina



St. Roch Market – Spring 2015



# Environmental & Historic Preservation — page 2

*A decade of progress through partnerships*

## Archaeological Survey

To streamline Hazard Mitigation grant reviews following hurricanes Katrina and Rita, FEMA carried out alternate treatment measures including an archaeological survey in New Orleans City Park, 30 additional New Orleans public parks and Fontainebleau State Park in St. Tammany Parish. Survey results were used to identify and evaluate archaeological resources on state and city land to assist local, state and federal agencies in planning for a future event and identify where sensitive historic properties are located. The archaeological survey covered multiple parks and encompassed 750 acres, identifying 49 archaeological sites, from both the prehistoric and historic era. The data from FEMA's study provides a better understanding of the history and prehistory of the New Orleans metropolitan area and allows for better planning decisions in post-



Artifacts



Archaeological Survey and Testing

## Historic Districts

FEMA surveyed all buildings within 15 National Register listed historic districts, within the City of New Orleans, for a total of 25,000 properties. The inventory survey provided information and professional photographs for each of these buildings to the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office and the City of New Orleans for use to benefit the public.

This data was collected and distributed by FEMA to offset adverse effects to historic properties resulting from demolition or elevations of private properties. FEMA also worked to place Edgewood Park, a historic streetcar-based subdivision in New Orleans developed in the early 20th century, on the National Register of Historic Places. FEMA researched the history of this neighborhood and described each one of the approximately 1,500 buildings in the district. FEMA completed this work to allow streamlined historic review for elevations of private properties across the State of Louisiana.



Historic Districts

## Old Beauregard Courthouse

Following extensive damage by Hurricane Katrina, FEMA grants were utilized to restore and renovate both the 1906 Old Beauregard Courthouse and the 34th District Courthouse in St. Bernard Parish. The Old Beauregard Courthouse was restored to its original 1906 appearance while a discreet addition was constructed to house a modern elevator and exit stairs. Restoration of the original Neoclassical appearance of the building required painstaking repair of original decorative plaster finishes and an exact replication of the building's wind-damaged metal cornice.



Old Beauregard Courthouse

# Environmental & Historic Preservation — page 3

*A decade of progress through partnerships*

## Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge

### LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

The Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge, an outdoor research laboratory, is located in Cameron and Vermilion parishes in southwest Louisiana. The refuge includes approximately 24 miles of shoreline along the gulf coast and serves to protect and manage fish and wildlife resources. The refuge boasts the highest alligator nesting densities in the United States.

Hurricane Rita destroyed Louisiana's west coast with high winds and storm surge. Located on the coast, the research and supporting facilities sustained devastating damage. FEMA conducted an environmental analysis of the proposed rebuilding effort in partnership with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, the local floodplain administrator and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The refuge has received a FEMA grant to construct state of the art facilities that will allow the refuge to continue its applied wetland research and the protection and management of local resources.

## Los Isleños Museum Complex

The Los Isleños Museum Complex is an active cultural center, living history museum and library in St. Bernard Parish. The complex is dedicated to the history and culture of the Isleños, Spanish citizens from the Canary Islands who settled in south Louisiana during the late 18th century. The museum complex was heavily damaged by high winds and floodwaters following hurricane Katrina.

Due to extensive ground disturbance associated with repairs and reconstruction of the facility, FEMA archaeologists conducted field work to identify areas within the complex that were archaeologically sensitive and needed to be avoided during the reconstruction of the museum facilities.

The survey documented evidence of Isleños settlements and the relatively under-represented Spanish contribution to the early development of Louisiana. Artifacts collected during the field work are being utilized in interpretive displays at the museum. The new museum complex includes the renovation of the circa 1800 Ducros Library and houses information and artifacts for educating the public about the early history of St. Bernard Parish.



Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge



Rockefeller Boathouse



Los Islenos Museum - Post-Katrina



Los Islenos Museum - Present

## Partnerships

In the immediate aftermath of Katrina, FEMA collaborated with federal, state and local partners to support the impacted communities. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and FEMA removed millions of cubic yards of debris from urban and rural areas across the region and collaborated to consider the effects of these demolitions and debris removal on historic properties, archaeological sites and the environment. FEMA worked with the Preservation Resource Center, the Green Coalition and others to recycle items from homes damaged by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Over 3,000 items such as doors, brackets, mantles, columns and window crowns were recouped prior to demolition and made available to the New Orleans community in their rebuilding efforts.

FEMA also worked with the U.S. Coast Guard during waterway debris removal to monitor thousands of miles of historic waterways to minimize or avoid disturbance to archaeological sites. The National Park Service collaborated with FEMA after Katrina to initiate an extensive survey using historic recordation standards and train staff. The Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office worked with FEMA to create liaison positions to work on digitization of archival maps and updating the City Archaeological probability map, used through the immediate response and into long-term recovery. FEMA has also worked closely with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for the construction of the new University Medical Center and VA hospital in New Orleans.

## Audubon Nature Center

The Audubon Nature Center is a non-profit educational facility offering families and school groups hands-on, natural and physical science programs featuring live animals, planetarium shows, overnight adventures and teacher workshops. Wind, rain and flooding from Hurricane Katrina significantly damaged the facility, leaving the community in need of safe facilities that were up to current codes and standards.

FEMA conducted environmental analysis and coordinated with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to minimize and avoid impacts to the surrounding wetlands. The Audubon Nature Center has received a FEMA grant that will allow the facility to continue providing natural resource education programs in the New Orleans metropolitan area.



Waterway Debris



Demolitions



Recycled Housing Items



Audubon Nature Center Demolition



New Audubon Nature Center Plans