

FEMA Environmental Assessment Process Overview

City of New Bern, Stanley White Recreation Center

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Partners in shaping resilient communities



Office of Environmental planning and Historic Preservation (OEHP) Mission Statement

Reducing the impact that disasters and emergency management decisions and operations have on the nation's natural and cultural resources.

OEHP Functions:

Provide environmental and historic preservation technical assistance and guidance for all FEMA Programs.

Integrate the protection and enhancement of environmental, historic and cultural resources in all programs and activities.

Coordinate the environmental and historic preservation activities with Regional Environmental Officers.



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Department of Homeland Security (DHS) EHP roles

Environmental stewardship and DHS missions are compatible and complementary.

NEPA requires Federal agencies to use all practicable means within their authority, and consistent with other essential considerations of national policy, to create and maintain conditions under which people and nature can exist in productive harmony and fulfill the social, economic, and other needs of present and future generations of Americans.

Integrating environmental planning requirements of NEPA with the planning and implementation of DHS actions helps to achieve environmental sustainability goals.



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DHS role for FEMA EHP

Environmental stewardship, preservation of historic and cultural resources, and sustainability are complementary goals of the emergency management mission and activities of FEMA.

FEMA promotes these goals to support development of resilient communities in light of disasters, sea level rise, climate change, and other impacts that threaten the human environment.

Environmental, historic, and cultural resources are important considerations when preparing for, responding to, recovering from, and mitigating hazards to the United States.



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What is purpose of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)?

A national policy which will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment; to promote efforts which will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of man; to enrich the understanding of the ecological systems and natural resources important to the Nation; and to establish a Council on Environmental Quality.



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What is an Environmental Assessment

Environmental Assessments (EAs) and associated documents are generated to fulfill the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). EAs are used to determine if significant environmental impacts would occur as a result of a FEMA action or a FEMA funded action.



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Factors of the Environmental Assessment

An EA must address and document those areas where there is a potential to significantly affect the environment and provide the public an opportunity for involvement and input in the decision process in accordance with the law.

The EA concludes with a one of two decision documents,

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

or the Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).



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NEPA Process

National Environmental Policy Act

Public Law 91-190

Congressional mandate that before federal agencies make decisions, they must consider the effects of their actions on the quality of the human environment

Environment defined:

Biological

Physical

Social

Cultural

Economic



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National Environmental Policy Act

Public Law 91-190

Does not support environmental preservation at all costs

Requires Federal officials to consider environmental values alongside technical and economic considerations

Interdisciplinary approach to Federal project planning and decision making



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National Environmental Policy Act

Public Law 91-190

National Historic
Preservation Act
Endangered Species Act
Executive Orders:
Floodplains
Wetlands
Environmental Justice

Clean Water Act
Clean Air Act
Resource Conservation
and Recovery Act
Coastal Zone
Management Act



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National Environmental Policy Act

Public Law 91-190

Consider reasonable alternatives

Interagency communication

Solicit public input

Document decision making process

Triggered when federal agencies license, permit or fund a project ($\geq \$1$)



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Stanley White Recreation Center



Stanley White Recreation Center

Due to the location in the floodplain FEMA must evaluate practicable alternatives to location outside of the floodplain.

This protects federal investment in the floodplain and builds resiliency in the community by minimizing risk with relocation outside of the floodplain.



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National Flood Hazard Layer FIRMette



77°33'1"W 35°7'1"N



USGS The National Map, Orthoimagery, Data refreshed October, 2020

0 250 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet 1:6,000

77°23'W 35°6'32"N

Legend

SEE FIS REPORT FOR DETAILED LEGEND AND INDEX MAP FOR FIRM PANEL LAYOUT

SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREAS		Without Base Flood Elevation (BFE) Zone A, V, AE
		With BFE or Depth Zone AE, AO, AV, VE, AR
		Regulatory Floodway
OTHER AREAS OF FLOOD HAZARD		0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard, Areas of 1% annual chance flood with average depth less than one foot or with drainage areas of less than one square mile Zone X
		Future Conditions 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard Zone X
		Area with Reduced Flood Risk due to Levees. See Notes, Zone X
		Area with Flood Risk due to Levees Zone D
OTHER AREAS		Area of Minimal Flood Hazard Zone X
		Effective LOMRs
GENERAL STRUCTURES		Channel, Culvert, or Storm Sewer
		Levee, Dike, or Floodwall
OTHER FEATURES		Cross Sections with 1% Annual Chance
		Water Surface Elevation
		Coastal Transect
		Base Flood Elevation Line (BFE)
		Limit of Study
		Jurisdiction Boundary
MAP PANELS		Digital Data Available
		No Digital Data Available
		Unmapped

This map complies with FEMA's standards for the use of digital flood maps if it is not void as described below. The basemap shown complies with FEMA's basemap accuracy standards.


The flood hazard information is derived directly from the authoritative NFHL web services provided by FEMA. This map was exported on 10/21/2020 at 1:20 PM and does not reflect changes or amendments subsequent to this date and time. The NFHL and effective information may change or become superseded by new data over time.

This map image is void if the one or more of the following map elements do not appear: basemap imagery, flood zone labels, legend, scale bar, map creation date, community identifiers, FIRM panel number, and FIRM effective date. Map images for unmapped and unmodernized areas cannot be used for regulatory purposes.



What can happen at the old location, should the facility be relocated?

Per FEMA requirements the space must be utilized as open space.



Open space requirements. The property shall be dedicated and maintained in perpetuity as open space for the conservation of natural floodplain functions.

These uses may include: Parks for outdoor recreational activities; wetlands management; nature reserves; cultivation; grazing; camping (except where adequate warning time is not available to allow evacuation); unimproved, unpaved parking lots; buffer zones; and other uses FEMA determines compatible with this part.




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Restrictions on open space

Allowable uses generally do not include:



Walled buildings, levees, dikes, or floodwalls, paved roads, highways, bridges, cemeteries, landfills, storage of any hazardous or toxic materials, above or below ground pumping and switching stations, above or below ground storage tanks, paved parking, off-site fill or other uses that obstruct the natural and beneficial functions of the floodplain.



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EO 11988 requirements

Because of the location in floodplain, FEMA takes a hard look before making significant investments that have potential to encourage floodplain development. This includes sites outside the floodplain as alternative sites.

FEMA also recognizes that some impacts to floodplains or investments in floodplains cannot be avoided, and for those options we must consider how we make a smart investment that promotes resilience based on the inherent flood risk. Elevation and flood-proofing provide some protection to the facility by virtue of its location in the floodplain.



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Public Involvement Process

FEMA will use all relevant information to make an open and transparent decision.

This meeting this afternoon is one of the methods for public engagement.

Past meetings included input as to what functions will go into the new facility.

Future meetings are to include proposed locations alternatives.

Copies of the Environmental Assessment will be provided for the public to comment on prior to finalizing the decision.



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