

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) hereby gives notice to the public of its intent to reimburse eligible applicants for eligible costs to repair or replace facilities damaged by **Hurricane Michael (FEMA-DR-4399-FL)** occurring **October 7, 2018 to October 19, 2018**. This notice applies to the Public Assistance (PA) project for dune construction on St. Joseph Peninsula Reach, Indian Pass Reach, and St. Joe Beach (Beacon Hill Reach), Florida, implemented under the authority of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207.

Under a major disaster declaration, **FEMA-DR-4399-FL**, signed by the President on **October 11, 2018**, Gulf County was designated as adversely affected by the disaster and eligible for PA funding.

This public notice concerns activities pertaining to the construction of dunes along the coast of Gulf County. Due to Hurricane Michael, Gulf County experienced Hurricane force winds and storm surge which forced sand and other materials inland, removing sand from the beachfront. The existing dune structures at St. Joseph Peninsula Reach, Indian Pass Reach, and St. Joe Beach (Beacon Hill) Reach were heavily eroded.

The proposed project will construct a series of emergency coastal dunes along the approximately 9.97 miles of beach in Gulf County associated with the three (3) reaches. A collective total of 305,358 cubic yards will be placed during the construction of the emergency coastal dunes. The work will be conducted between Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) reference monuments R-1 and R-155. Gulf County will obtain beach compatible sand from Honeyville Sand Pit. Honeyville Pit is an approved upland source located at (30.056030, -85.201171) in Wewahitchka, Florida and is operated by Robert and Roberts, Inc. The Applicant will also install dune plantings and sand fencing as part of their design in conjunction with ongoing input from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Gulf County has coordinated with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and will coordinate with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to obtain all necessary permits and will comply with all applicable permit conditions.

FEMA has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA). An alternatives analysis was performed, which included the evaluation of the proposed action and the no action alternative. Further detailed descriptions of all alternatives may be reviewed in the EA conducted by FEMA or by contacting FEMA-R4EHP@fema.dhs.gov for a copy. The draft EA is available for public comment and can be viewed on FEMA's and the applicant's website at the following locations:

<https://www.floridadisaster.org/dem/recovery/>

http://www.gulfcounty-fl.gov/county_government/emergency_management

Gulf County Court House at 1000 Cecil G Costin, Sr Blvd, Port St Joe, Fl 32456

The Clean Water Act (CWA) established the framework that regulates the discharge of pollutants into Waters of the U.S. (WOUS). The work being done will take place above the annual high tide line and will not require permitting by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) requires federal agencies to consult with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for effects to federally listed threatened and endangered species. FEMA consulted with USFWS, which issued a Biological Opinion that was utilized to minimize impacts to listed species by applying appropriate terms and conditions.

The Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA) requires federal agencies to consult with the USFWS before approving any action involving permanent restoration of a facility or structure on or attached to a Coastal Barrier Resources System (CBRS) unit. FEMA consulted with the USFWS and received concurrence regarding FEMA's determination that the project meets the specific exemptions regarding projects for the study, management, protection, and enhancement of fish and wildlife resources and habitats.

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires federal agencies to consider the impacts of their undertakings on historic properties. FEMA has made a determination of No Adverse Effect on Historic Properties based on concurrence received from the Florida State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to the FEMA on January 27, 2020.

Presidential Executive Orders (EO) 11988 and 11990 require that all federal actions in or affecting floodplains or wetlands be reviewed for relocation opportunities and evaluated for social, economic, historical, environmental, legal, and safety considerations. The project is located in the AE (8), AE (12), VE (10), VE (11), VE (12), VE (13), VE (14), and VE (15) Zones, otherwise known as the Coastal High Hazard Areas, otherwise known as areas subject to inundation by the 1-percent-annual-chance flood event, per Gulf County Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) Panel Numbers 12045C0217G, 12045C0236G, 12045C0238G, 12005C0517H dated 4/16/2009 and 6/2/2009 and 12045C0441F, 12045C0442F, 12045C0461F, 12045C0319F, 12045C0407F, 12045C0409F, 12045C0428F, and 12045C0436F dated 9/28/2007. The Gulf County coastal dune sections are functionally dependent upon their locations within floodplains, provide habitat for wildlife, open space uses for recreation and will provide storm damage reduction benefits to the existing shore, upland habitat and infrastructure. If no action is taken to construct the coastal dunes, the Gulf County coastline would remain vulnerable to higher wave action and ongoing erosion from future storm events. In addition, the surrounding communities would suffer economic and social losses and benefits to listed species would not occur.

This will serve as the final public notice regarding the above-described action funded by the FEMA PA program. Interested persons may obtain information about these actions or a specific project by writing to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region 4, 3003 Chamblee-Tucker Road, Atlanta, Georgia 30341, or by emailing FEMA-R4EHP@fema.dhs.gov. Comments should be sent in writing with the subject line, FL-4399-PW-00630, Gulf County, at the above address within 30 days of the date of this notice.