FEMA PUBLIC NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
CLAY COUNTY FIRE RESCUE STATION #24 DEMOLITION AND RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT
CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA

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 Matthew occurring during the incident period of October 03, 2016, to October 19, 2016. This notice applies to the Public Assistance (PA) project for the Clay County proposed demolition and reconstruction of the Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24, Clay County, 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-4283-FL, signed by the president on October 08, 2016, Clay County was designated as adversely affected by the disaster and eligible for PA funding.

This public notice concerns activities pertaining to the Clay County proposed demolition and reconstruction of Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24 at 5105 Sweat Road, Green Cove Springs, Clay County, Florida. As a result of Hurricane Matthew in 2016, Shands Bridge Pier in Green Cove Springs, Clay County, Florida was substantially damaged. Clay County determined that the best mitigation option was to remove the damaged pier, rather than proceed with its reconstruction. Accordingly, Clay County requested that the applicable PA funds be redirected from the reconstruction of the damaged Shands Bridge Pier to an alternate project for the demolition and reconstruction of Clay County Fire Rescue Station # 24. The proposed demolition and reconstruction activities would occur on two (2) parcels owned by the County, totaling approximately seven (7) acres, at GPS coordinates: (29.921512, -81.681565). The project consists of removing the existing station, well pump house, and septic system, and building a new larger, modern station with new wells, paved surfaces, stormwater retention pond and system, septic system, and fencing. The new facility will be designed to present codes and standards to minimize damage from future storm events.

In accordance with Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969; DHS Directive 023-01, DHS Instruction Manual 023-01-001-01, FEMA Directive 108-1, and FEMA Instruction 108-1-1, to the extent they are consistent with NEPA; National Historic Preservation Act, Executive Order 11988, Executive Order 11990, and 44 CFR Part 9, 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 the Florida Division of Emergency Management's and Clay County's websites at the following locations:

FDEM WEBSITE LOCATION:
https://www.floridadisaster.org/public-notices/

CLAY COUNTY WEBSITE LOCATION:
https://www.claycountygov.com/government/grants

A hard copy of the EA is available for review at the Clay County Grants Office located at 420 College Drive, Ste 107, Middleburg, FL 32068 during the following hours: Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. (excluding legal holidays).

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 affects to federally listed threatened and endangered species. In accordance with Section 7 of the ESA, the proposed Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24 project was evaluated for potential impacts to federally listed threatened and endangered species that may be present in the project area. Through an IPaC (Information for Planning and Consultation) review, five (5) federally listed species were identified within the vicinity of the project area. As best available data does not support their presence in the project area and/or the species are rare due to a lack of respective suitable habitat, FEMA made a determination of no effect for the Eastern black rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis ssp. Jamaicensis*), whooping crane (*Grus americana*), and tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*). FEMA made a determination of may affect, but not likely to adversely affect (MANLAA) for the remaining two (2) species--the Everglade snail kite (*Rostrhamus socialbilis plumbeus*) and Eastern Indigo Snake (*Drymarchon couperi*). FEMA initiated informal consultation with USFWS on September 18, 2024 (Appendix A). USFWS provided their concurrence with FEMA's determinations on February 27, 2025. USFWS' determination of compliance with Section 7 of the ESA is contingent upon adherence to three (3) special conditions during project-related activities.

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires federal agencies to take into account the effect of their undertakings on historic properties. The proposed Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24 area of potential effects (APE) was subjected to the *Phase I Cultural Resource Assessment Survey, Clay County Fire Station 24, Green Cove Springs, Clay County, Florida* and no intact subsurface deposits, surface features, or cultural resources [including properties considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)], were encountered as a result of this survey. Based on the results of FEMA's historic property identification efforts, no properties listed in or considered eligible for listing in the NRHP were located within the APE of the proposed Clay County Fire Station #24. Accordingly, FEMA made a finding of No Historic Properties Affected for this undertaking in accordance with 36 CFR 800.4(d)(1). FEMA consulted with the Florida State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and six (6) Federally Recognized Tribes either in or with interests in Clay County, Florida. Tribal consultation letters and copies of the Phase 1 cultural resource assessment survey report were submitted to six (6) Federally Recognized Tribes either in or with interests in Clay County, Florida. The Florida SHPO concurred with the survey results and recommendations and FEMA's determination of No Historic Properties Affected on July 09, 2025. No objections to the proposed project were expressed by the Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, or Seminole Tribe of Florida. FEMA's determination of No Historic Properties Affected and compliance with NHPA is contingent upon adherence to two (2) special conditions during project-related activities.

Presidential Executive Orders 11988 and 11990 require that all federal actions in or affecting the floodplain or wetlands be reviewed for opportunities to relocate and evaluated for social, economic, historical, environmental, legal, and safety considerations. The proposed Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24 demolition and reconstruction project would be located within unshaded Zone X, which is defined as an area of minimal flood risk outside of the 100-year floodplain and higher in elevation than the 500-year floodplain, per Clay County Unincorporated Areas Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) #12019C0295E, dated March 17, 2024. No extant wetlands features are mapped within the proposed project area.

This notice serves as the final public notice regarding the above-described action proposed for funded by the FEMA PA Program. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the EA and information about these actions by writing to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region 4, 3005 Chamblee Tucker Road, Atlanta, Georgia 30341, or by emailing FEMA-R4EHP@fema.dhs.gov. Comments should be sent in writing with the subject line, "PA 4283-00897, Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24 Demolition and Reconstruction Project" at the above address within 30 days of the date of this notice. A copy of the finalized EA will be posted on FEMA's website at the following location:

FEMA WEBSITE LOCATION:
https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/environmental-historic/nepa-repository

Draft Environmental Assessment

783840 Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24 Demolition and Reconstruction

Green Cove Springs, Clay County, Florida

PA-04-FL-4283-PW-00897

September 29, 2025

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Region 4– Atlanta, GA

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACM	Asbestos Containing Material
AIRFA	American Indian Religious Freedom Act
APE	Area of Potential Effect
ARPA	Archaeological Resources Protection Act
BMPs	Best Management Practices
CAA	Clean Air Act
CBIA	Coastal Barrier Improvement Act
CBRA	Coastal Barrier Resources Act
CBRS	Coastal Barrier Resource System
CCCL	Coastal Construction Control Line
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFC	chlorofluorocarbons
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CMS	Concurrency Management System
CSXT	North American Rail Network Lines
CWA	Clean Water Act
CZMA	Coastal Zone Management Act
CZMP	Coastal Zone Management Plan
dB	Decibels
DBH	Diameter at Breast Height
DHR	Florida Division of Historical Resources
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DNL	Day-Night Average Sound Level
EA	Environmental Assessment
EFH	Essential Fish Habitat

EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EO	Executive Order
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ERP	Environmental Resource Permit
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FCMP	Florida Coastal Management Program
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FDEP	Florida Department of Environmental Protection
FDEM	Florida Division of Emergency Management
FHA	Federal Highway Administration
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FMSF	Florida Master Site File
FNAI	Florida Natural Areas Inventory
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FPPA	Farmlands Protection Policy Act
FWC	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPM	Gallon per Minute
ITE	Institute of Transportation Engineers
IPaC	Information Planning and Consultation
LAeq	LAeq (Equivalent Continuous Sound Pressure Level)
LDC	Land Development Code
MANLAA	May Affect, But Not Likely to Adversely Affect
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MSA	Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards

NAGPRA	Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFHL	National Flood Hazard Layer
NGVD	National Geodetic Vertical Datum
NHL	National Historic Landmark
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NPS	National Parks Service
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NWI	National Wetland Inventory
OEHP	Office of Environmental Planning & Historic Preservation
ONAC	Office of Noise Abatement and Control
OPA	Otherwise Protected Area
PA	Public Assistance
PCB	Polychlorinated Biphenyls
PFO1C	Palustrine, Forested, Broad-Leaved Deciduous, Seasonally Flooded
PL	Public Law
PNP	Private Nonprofit
PO-1	Public Ownership
PUBHx	Palustrine, Unconsolidated Bottom, Permanently Flooded, Excavated
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
ROW	Right-of-Way
RR	Rural Residential

RRP	Renovation, Repair, and Painting
SDA	Soil Data Access
SFHA	Special Flood Hazard Area
SHM&SW	State Hazardous Materials & Solid Waste
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SJRWMD	St. John's River Water Management District
SOI	Secretary of Interior
STP	Shovel Test Pit
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
THPO	Tribal Historic Preservation Office
U.S.	United States
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
U.S.C.	United States Code
USCB	U.S. Census Bureau
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USDOT	U.S. Department of Transportation
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
WACS	Water Assurance Compliance System
WMD	Water Management District
WOTUS	Waters of the U.S.

1. Introduction

Hurricane Matthew impacted Florida between October 03, 2016, and October 19, 2016, bringing high winds, heavy rain, storm surge and wave action. The president signed a disaster declaration (FEMA-4283-DR-FL) on October 08, 2016, authorizing the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide federal assistance to the designated areas of Florida. This assistance is provided pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act), and Public Law (PL) 93-288, as amended. Section 406 of the Stafford Act authorizes FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) Program to repair, restore, and replace state and local government and certain private nonprofit facilities damaged as a result of the event.

Clay County, Florida was designated in Hurricane Matthew to receive federal assistance. Clay County has applied through the PA Program to receive funding to restore the damaged Shands Bridge Pier, located at 4051 Old Shands Bridge Boat Launch Road in Green Cove Springs, Florida, that was damaged by Hurricane Matthew. Upon further evaluation, Clay County determined that the best mitigation option was to remove the damaged pier instead of reconstruction. Clay County requested the PA funds be redirected from the damaged Shands Bridge Pier to the replacement of Clay County Fire Rescue Station # 24 at 5105 Sweat Road, Green Cove Springs, Florida (project).

This Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared for FEMA by WGI, Inc., on behalf of Clay County Board of Commissioners to support replacing the existing Fire Rescue Station #24 in Green Cove Springs, Florida. Clay County is applying for a FEMA PA grant for financial assistance to remove the existing station, well pump house, and septic system, and build a new larger, modern station with new wells, paved surfaces, stormwater retention pond and system, septic system, and fencing. The new facility will be designed to present codes and standards to minimize damage from future storm events.

This EA has been prepared in accordance with Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, DHS Directive 023-01, DHS Instruction Manual 023-01-001-01, FEMA Directive 108-1, and FEMA Instruction 108-1-1, to the extent they are consistent with NEPA. As a federal agency, FEMA is required to comply with NEPA and all other applicable laws and regulations. To achieve this level of compliance, FEMA is required to consider potential environmental impacts before funding or approving actions and projects. By preparing this EA, FEMA has analyzed the potential environmental impacts associated with the alternatives described in this EA.

The purpose of this EA is to meet FEMA's responsibilities under NEPA and to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action. FEMA will use the findings in this EA to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed undertaking or to issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

2. Purpose and Need

As a result of Hurricane Matthew in 2016, Shands Bridge Pier in Green Cove Springs, Clay County, Florida was substantially damaged. Clay County may be eligible for funding through the FEMA PA Program pursuant to Title 44 of the CFR § 206.223(a)(3). Clay County determined that the best mitigation option was to remove the damaged pier, rather than proceed with its reconstruction. Accordingly, Clay County requested the PA funds be redirected from the reconstruction of the damaged Shands Bridge Pier to an alternate project for the replacement of Clay County Fire Rescue Station # 24 at 5105 Sweat Road, Green Cove Springs, Florida, GPS coordinates: (29.921512, -81.681565).

The objective of FEMA's PA Program is to provide funding assistance to state, tribal and local governments, and certain types of Private Nonprofit (PNP) organizations so that communities can quickly respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies declared by the President. Through the PA Program, FEMA provides supplemental federal disaster assistance for debris removal, emergency protective measures, and the repair, replacement, or restoration of disaster- damaged, publicly owned facilities and the facilities of certain PNP organizations. The PA Program also encourages protection of these damaged facilities from future events by providing funding assistance for hazard mitigation measures during the recovery process.

The purpose of the project is to replace the existing Clay County Fire Rescue Station # 24 with a larger, modern station designed under current standards and practices in fire station design and function and bring the station up to code standards such as adhering to modern wind loads specifications for major storms.

The project need is to provide the community of Green Cove Springs and a portion of Clay County, Florida with a modern, reliable, and efficient fire station to respond to local emergencies. The current crew operates out of a modular home and utilizes the old volunteer station equipment two (2)-bay garage for fire truck storage. During major storms such as tropical storms (sustained winds of 39 – 74 mph) and hurricanes (>74 mph), there is a potential safety hazard for the response crew and vehicles due to the structures not meeting current codes mentioned above, so the crew must be relocated to a neighboring district. This relocation can cause a delay in response times for emergencies in Green Cove Springs and the surrounding communities within Clay County.

In accordance with NEPA, the EA process for a proposed federal action must include an evaluation of alternatives and a discussion of the potential environmental impacts. This EA was prepared in accordance with NEPA and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Directive 023-01, Rev. 01, DHS Instruction 023-01-001-1, Rev. 01, FEMA Directive 108-1, and FEMA Instruction 108-1-1, to the extent they are consistent with NEPA. As part of this NEPA review, the requirements of other environmental laws and executive orders are addressed.

3. Project Location and Background

The Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24 property is located at 5105 Sweat Road, Green Cove Springs, Clay County, Florida, GPS coordinates: (29.921512, -81.681565). The property is comprised of two (2) parcels owned by the County; these parcels total approximately seven (7) acres. The western part

of the property has a modular home unit which is utilized as living quarters for the fire fighters and a two (2)-bay garage fire station for emergency vehicle and equipment storage. The eastern part of the property has some wooded areas and a cleared area that was once a softball field.

The abandoned softball field still has fencing and dugout areas; however, the infield and outfield of the former playing area has been overtaken by grasses and other opportunistic herbaceous species. Further east and north of the softball field is a forested area which consists of primarily laurel oaks with interspersed slash pine.

To the north of the fire station property is Shiloh Baptist Church and to the east lies forested land and then single-family residential homes. Beyond the church to areas north and east is a large conservation area known as the Bayard Wildlife Management Area. To the northwest of the fire station property is SR 226 and then forested land. Southwest of the property is Sweat Road, then a stormwater management pond, then US-17, then forested and agricultural areas.

Figure 3.1 Location Map

3.1. Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24

The existing 1929.6 square-foot pre-engineered, steel-framed station was constructed in 1982 and consists of a two (2)-bay garage; it houses one (1) fire engine, one (1) rescue vehicle, and one (1) water tender (water tanker truck). There is a 1940.28 square-foot modular home used as living quarters that was added in 2015 (Clay County, 2025). The station currently is run by a six (6)-member crew, working 24 hours a day. The existing garage bays were designed and used as a volunteer fire station before being converted into a full-time station in 2015. There is a 90.25-square foot well pump house and 1586.27-square foot septic system, as well as 10,894.37 square feet of impervious parking and 2,906.31 square feet of gravel surface.

Photo 1 – Front facing image of the existing Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24. (Photo taken April 21, 2025)

Photo 2 – Street facing image of the existing Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24. (Photo taken April 21, 2025)

4. Alternatives

Two (2) alternatives are considered in addressing the purpose and need of the Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24 Project. Alternative 1 is the No Action Alternative and Alternative 2 (Proposed Action) would reconstruct the existing Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24 with a larger facility built to current codes and standards. Reasonable alternatives are those that meet the underlying purpose of, and need for, the Proposed Action; are feasible from both technical and economic standpoints; and meet reasonable screening criteria (selection standards) that are suitable to a particular action. No reasonable alternatives meeting the purpose and need of the Proposed Action were identified, considered, and subsequently eliminated from detailed analysis in this EA.

4.1. Alternative 1: No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no construction or replacement of the fire station. The existing fire rescue station would continue to be used.

During high storm events the fire rescue crew must relocate as the current structure is not designed to withstand these events. This relocation can cause a delay in response times for emergencies in Green Cove Springs and the surrounding communities within Clay County during events when

emergency services are widely needed. As such, the existing Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24 would continue to be vacated and become inoperable during high windstorm events. In addition, the current structure would not be upgraded to current codes and standards which would leave the structures vulnerable to damage from future tropical weather events.

Alternative 1 (No Action Alternative) does not meet the purpose and need for the Project because it does not provide the community of Green Cove Springs and a portion of Clay County with a modern, reliable, and efficient fire station to respond to local emergencies. However, it is retained to serve as a baseline for comparison to the build alternative.

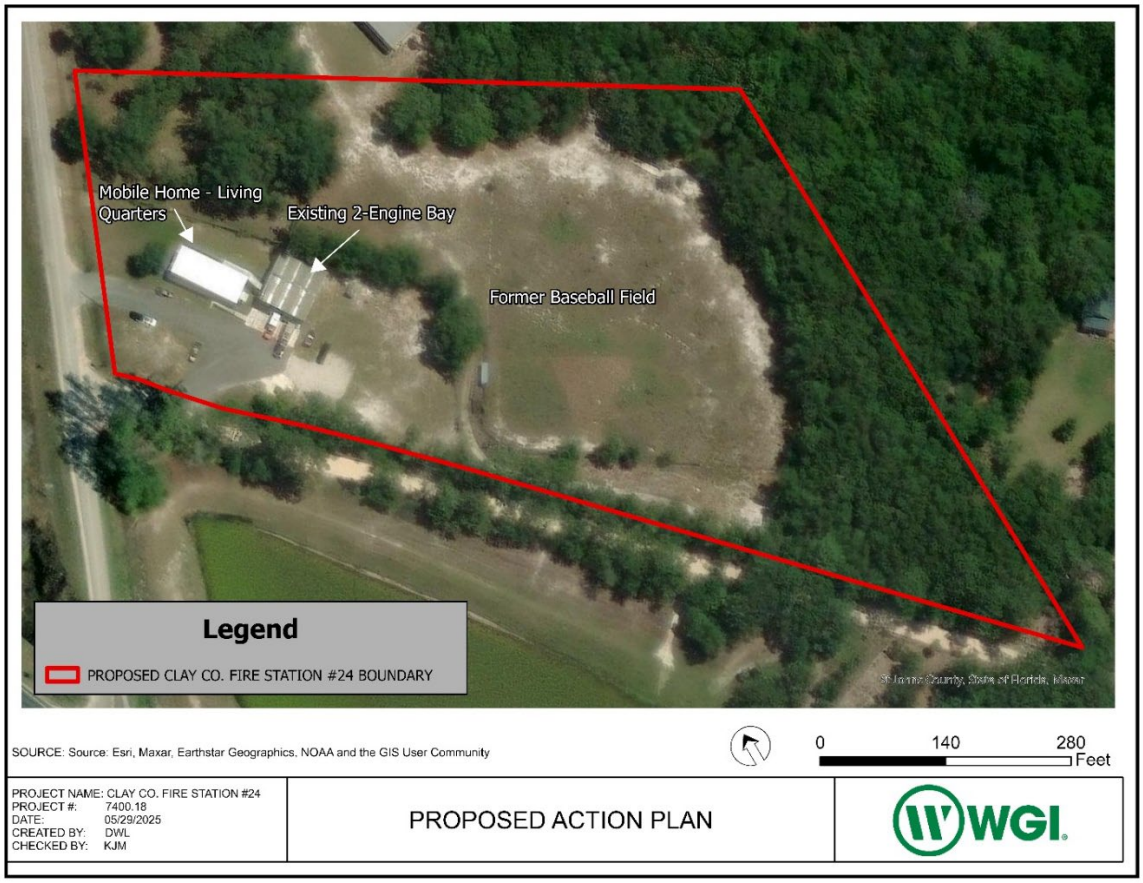

Figure 4.1 No Action Alternative - Aerial Photograph of Existing Station

4.2. Alternative 2: Demolish and Reconstruct Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24 (Proposed Action)

This alternative is to replace the existing Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24 with a new, larger fire station facility that will support the community during tropical weather events (**Figure 4.2**). The construction of the new fire station will be completed in two (2) phases so the existing fire station can remain operational during the construction of the new station. The new facility will be constructed on the parcel of the existing fire station and expand into an adjacent parcel Clay County purchased in 2023. The proposed action will disturb a total of 3.94 acres included within a total project area of

approximately seven (7) acres. The remaining undisturbed area of the additional parcel will be left to its current vegetated status and may be later used for an undefined future project or activity.

The new fire station will consist of a 16,837 square foot (SF) building that will house living quarters, fitness area, offices, showers, restrooms, kitchen, common area, various storage areas, and meeting room. The facility will also include a four (4) bay garage for vehicle and equipment storage. Support structures for the facility will include one 12-inch, 600 gallon per minute (GPM) well enclosed in a new 183.64 SF well house to supply water for firefighting activities. Two (2) domestic 5-inch, 70 GPM domestic water wells, and associated pumps, valves, piping, and filtration systems, will supply fresh water for the facility. A new 3,456 SF septic drain field will be constructed to contain and treat wastewater for the facility.

Improvements to the property to support the new facility will include constructing approximately 63,006.86 SF of concrete and asphalt paved surfaces for driveways, parking area, and sidewalks. A new 5,491 SF stormwater retention pond and stormwater system will be constructed to contain and filter stormwater runoff of the property. A 338 linear foot, 6-foot-tall chain-link fence will be constructed around the firefighter parking area and new utility poles will be installed to connect the facility to existing power utilities in the right-of-way (ROW).

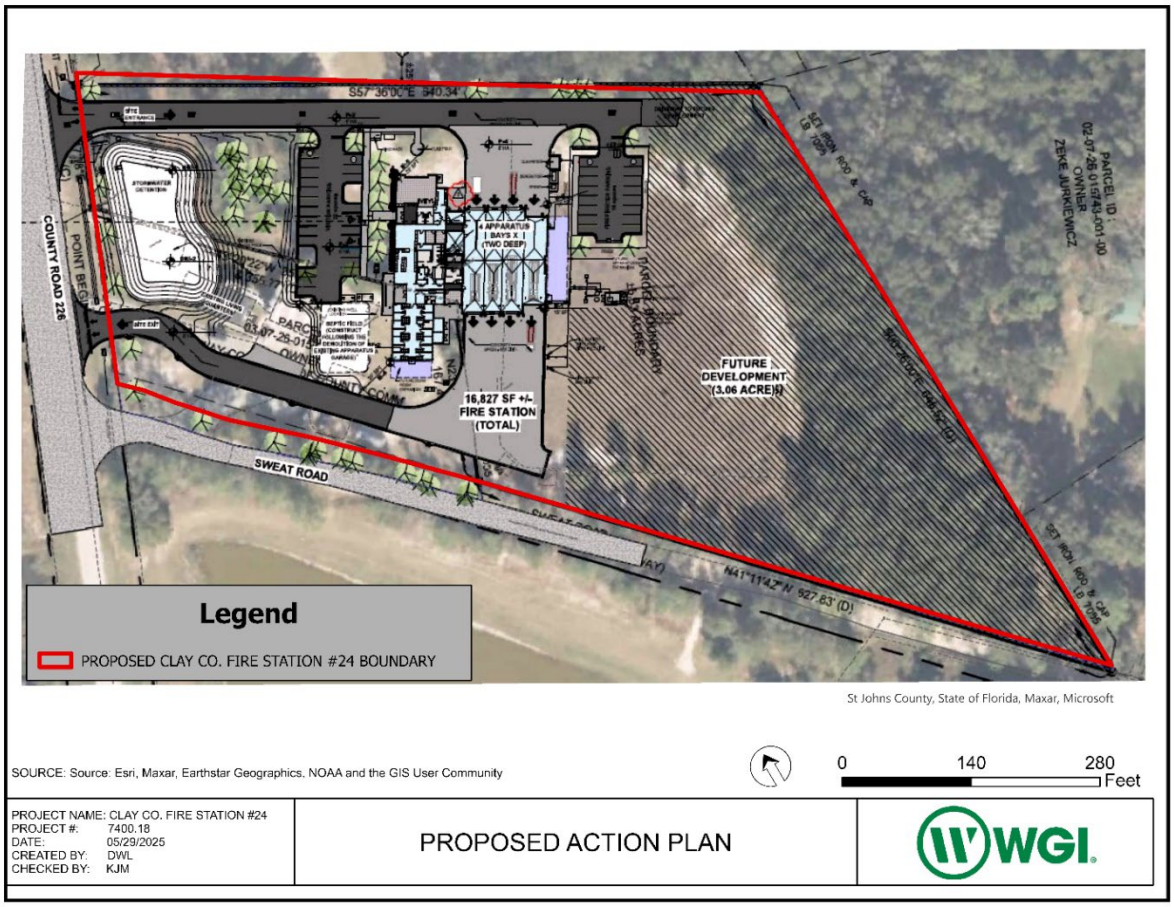

Figure 4.2 Proposed Action

The first part of Phase I demolition will consist of clearing activities, including removal of eighty-nine (89) trees. Before clearing activities begin, stormwater pollution prevention best management practices (BMPs) will be installed. Clearing will also include removal of fencing and concrete slabs associated with the old softball field along with most of the existing asphalt drive and parking spaces. All demolished materials will be properly contained, removed, and disposed/recycled in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations. The existing water well, septic system, modular home, and bays will remain and continue to be used to support the community in the area. The first part of Phase I construction activities will include grading the area of the new facility, driveway, and parking spaces. Construction of the new fire rescue station, installation of new water wells, water pumps, and other water systems to support the station. The stormwater system will be installed, and half of the stormwater detention pond will be excavated.

Upon completion of the first part of Phase I, the crew and equipment will relocate from the old living quarters and two (2)-bay garage into the new fire station facility. The existing living quarters, bays, concrete, and septic system will be removed. The pump house of the existing well will be removed and the old well plugged. The second part of Phase I includes demolition of old structures and installation of the new septic field.

Phase II construction will primarily consist of paving the driveway and parking lots, installation of sidewalks and curbs, pavement marking, signage, completion of the stormwater detention pond and landscaping. After completion of Phase II construction, all BMPs will be removed and properly disposed of. The new Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24 facility is designed to house additional crew and equipment in the future should the need arise but there are no plans to immediately add crew members or equipment. The overall construction duration for the Project is estimated to be thirteen (13) months.

Alternative 2 (Proposed Action) meets the purpose and need for the project because it would replace the existing facility with a modern, reliable, and efficient fire station to respond to local emergencies. Alternative 2 is carried forward for further evaluation.

4.3. Alternatives Considered and Dismissed

No other reasonable and prudent alternatives meeting the purpose and need of the Proposed Action were identified, and no alternatives were rejected from further consideration.

4.4. Impact Evaluation

NEPA requires evaluation of the reasonably foreseeable environmental effects of the proposed agency action. When possible, quantitative information is provided to establish potential impacts; otherwise, the potential qualitative impacts are evaluated based on the criteria listed in Table 4.4a:

Table 4.4a: Impact Significance and Context Evaluation Criteria for Potential Impacts

Impact Scale	Criteria
None/Negligible	The resource area would not be affected and there would be no impact, OR changes or benefits would either be non-detectable or, if detected, would have effects that would be slight and local. Impacts would be well below regulatory standards, as applicable.
Minor	Changes to the resource would be measurable, but the changes would be small and localized. Impacts or benefits would be within or below regulatory standards, as applicable. Mitigation measures would reduce any potential adverse effects.
Moderate	Changes to the resource would be measurable and have either localized or regional scale impacts/benefits. Impacts would be within or below regulatory standards, but historical conditions would be altered on a short-term basis. Mitigation measures would be necessary, and the measures would reduce any potential adverse effects.
Major	Changes to the resource would be readily measurable and would have substantial consequences/benefits on a local or regional level. Impacts would exceed regulatory standards. Mitigation measures to offset the adverse effects would be required to reduce impacts, though long-term changes to the resource would be expected.

The impact analysis in this EA evaluates the reasonably foreseeable environmental impacts of the No Action and Proposed Action alternatives. The analysis is provided in Section 5; a summary table of the potential impacts of the No Action and Proposed Action alternatives is provided here in Table 4.4b.:

Table 4.4b: Environmental Consequences by Alternative

Area of Evaluation	Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Proposed Action	Environmental Protection Measures and Required Permits for Alternative 2
Physical Resource: Geology and Soils	None	Negligible, construction work will have short-term impacts, and the new fire station will operate to the same way as the pre-existing fire station	None

Area of Evaluation	Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Proposed Action	Environmental Protection Measures and Required Permits for Alternative 2
Physical Resource: Prime Farmland	None	None, no prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, or farmland of local importance.	None
Physical Resource: Air Quality	None	Minor, short in duration during construction and negligible in the long term.	None
Water Resource: Water Quality	None	Stormwater Pollution Prevention BMPs will be implemented to comply with a State of FDEP issued NPDES Generic Permit for project before construction so the project is expected to have negligible impacts.	SJRWMD Environmental Resource Permit; State of Florida Permit(s) to Construct, Repair, Modify, or Abandon a Well; FDEP or SJRWMD Water Use Permit; and FDEP issued NPDES Generic Permit for Stormwater Discharge from Large and Small Construction Activities.

Area of Evaluation	Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Proposed Action	Environmental Protection Measures and Required Permits for Alternative 2
Water Resource: Floodplains	None	None, Project not located within a 100-year or 500-year floodplain. A storm water management facility will mitigate the additional impervious cover that is added to the drainage area and will not cause a rise to the floodplain.	None
Water Resource: Wetlands	None	None	None
Coastal Resource: Coastal Zone Management Act	None, falls within a county that has been designated as an interior county.	None, falls within a county that has been designated as an interior county.	None, project is consistent with the FCMP
Coastal Resource: Coastal Barrier Resource Act and Coastal Barrier Improvement Act	Not applicable, not within a CBRA unit.	Not applicable, not within a CBRA unit.	None
Biological Resource: Threatened and Endangered Species	None	None, not likely to adversely affect the Everglade snail kite and Eastern Indigo Snake and no effect to the Eastern black rail, whooping crane, and tricolored bat. Burrowing Owl survey and relocation of the existing population before construction to a State approved recipient site.	Three (3) ESA special conditions to be implemented during project-related activities listed in Section 5.4.1 and Section 7; FWC Gopher Tortoise relocation permit.

Area of Evaluation	Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Proposed Action	Environmental Protection Measures and Required Permits for Alternative 2
Biological Resource: Vegetation	None	Minor, the landscape architecture plans for the Proposed Action address the LDC and provide all required plantings to offset tree points.	Tree protection will be placed around preserved trees.
Biological Resource: Essential Fish Habitat	None	None	None
Biological Resource: Migratory Birds	None	None, removal of vegetation and structures outside of nesting season.	If removal cannot be accomplished outside of nesting season, identify and avoid active nest(s) until young fledge.
Cultural Resource: Viewshed Quality and Aesthetics	None	None, no historic properties affected.	None
Cultural Resource: Historic (Standing) Structures	None	None, no historic properties affected.	None
Cultural Resource: Archaeological Sites	None	None, no archaeological sites affected.	Two (2) NHPA special conditions to be adhered to during project-related activities listed in Section 5.5 and Section 7.

Area of Evaluation	Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Proposed Action	Environmental Protection Measures and Required Permits for Alternative 2
Socioeconomic Resource: Socioeconomic	None	None, no disruption or displacement of residents or communities.	None
Socioeconomic Resource: Land Use and Planning	None	None, no disruption or displacement of existing or planned land use.	None
Socioeconomic Resource: Zoning	None	None, no short- and long-term effects on zoning as there is no conflict with the zoning.	None
Socioeconomic Resource: Noise	None	Minor, short in duration during construction and negligible in the long term.	None
Socioeconomic Resource: Transportation	None	None, County Road 226 or Sweat Road. Neither of these roadways are listed in the County's CMS as being at or near capacity.	None

Area of Evaluation	Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Proposed Action	Environmental Protection Measures and Required Permits for Alternative 2
Socioeconomic Resource: Public Services and Utilities	Minor short-term, as the fire station will currently operate in limited capacity during severe storm events and moderate long-term impacts on the ability of people in the surrounding areas to access fire services.	Negligible short-term impact on the ability of people in the surrounding areas to access fire and rescue services as the current crew and equipment will operate in current capacity and function during certain construction phases of the new facility. The Proposed Action would provide major, long-term benefits to public fire and rescue services.	None
Socioeconomic Resource: Public Health and Safety	Minor short-term as the fire station will currently operate in limited capacity during severe storm events and moderate long-term impacts on the ability of people in the surrounding areas to access fire services.	Negligible in the short-term because should any releases during construction happen, the release will be contained, removed, and disposed of in accordance with construction contractor spill control procedures. None is the long-term as the fire station will operate in a similar manner.	Clay County Demolition Permit: Two (2) RCRA special conditions and two (2) SHM&SW conditions listed in Section 5.6.7 and Section 7.

5. Affected Environment and Potential Impacts

This section presents relevant information about existing resources and other values that may be affected by the Proposed Action and alternatives. In accordance with the NEPA and FEMA regulations and guidance, the existing conditions described herein provide the baseline for determining the

affected environment, environmental consequences or impacts that could result from implementing the Proposed Action, required permitting, and environmental protection measures to offset or minimize the effects.

5.1. PHYSICAL RESOURCES

5.1.1. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Existing Conditions

According to U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographic data, the property is approximately sixty-five (65) feet National Geodetic Vertical Datum (NGVD) in elevation. The topography in this part of the County is nearly flat.

The surface sediments in this part of Clay County are part of the Cypresshead Formation, generally composed of siliciclastics: reddish brown to reddish orange, unconsolidated to poorly consolidated, fine to very coarse grained, clean to clayey sands. The permeable sands of the Cypresshead Formation form part of the surficial aquifer system. While their permeability may allow contaminant migration, Clay County's potable water is derived from the Floridan Aquifer, normally found at an approximate depth of 400 to 500 feet below the surface. An intermediate confining unit, typically composed of clay and other low permeability materials, restricts flow between the surficial aquifer and the deeper Floridan Aquifer.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture-National Resource Conservation Service (USDA-NCRS) Soil Survey (**Figure 5.1**), the property is primarily mapped as Ortega fine sand (~56.7%). This soil type is a well-drained soil formed in a sandy deposit on marine terraces. The typical profile is fine sand from 0 to 80 inches with a 0 to 5% slope. Within the southeastern area of the site, the soils are mapped as Blanton fine sand; this soil is excessively to moderately well drained formed on marine terraces and knolls on marine terraces. The typical profile is fine sand from 0 to 58 inches and sandy clay loam from 58 to 80 inches with a 0 to 5% slope. The far western boundary of the property is mapped as Albany fine sand, this somewhat poorly drained soil is found on marine terraces and upland flats. The typical profile is fine sand from 0 to 47 inches, fine sandy loam from 47 to 60 inches, and sandy clay loam from 60 to 80 inches with a 0 to 5% slope. The soil types listed are described as having moderate to very high rates of permeability that would generally allow vertical migration of potential contamination. None of these soil types is classified as prime farmland.

The risk of corrosion for concrete for all three soil types is high throughout the property. According to the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) "Risk of corrosion" relates to potential electrochemical or chemical action that may corrode or weaken concrete.

The risk of corrosion is high for steel on the far western boundary of the property where the Albany type sand is mapped. Otherwise, the risk of corrosion for steel is low over the rest of the property where the Ortega and Blanton fine sands are mapped. According to the NRCS "Risk of corrosion" relates to potential soil-induced electrochemical or chemical action that may corrode or weaken uncoated steel.

The performance of surface water management systems is very limited for all three (3) soil types. According to the NRCS, the properties that affect the subsurface system performance include depth to the water table, salinity, flooding, sodicity, sand content, soil reaction, hydraulic conductivity, soil density, gypsum content, and subsidence.

Per the NRCS, shallow excavations are trenches or holes dug to a maximum depth of five (5) or six (6) feet for graves, utility lines, open ditches, or other purposes. The ratings are based on the soil properties that influence the ease of digging and the resistance to sloughing. The soils at this property have a “very limited” rating, indicative of a high potential for unstable excavation walls.

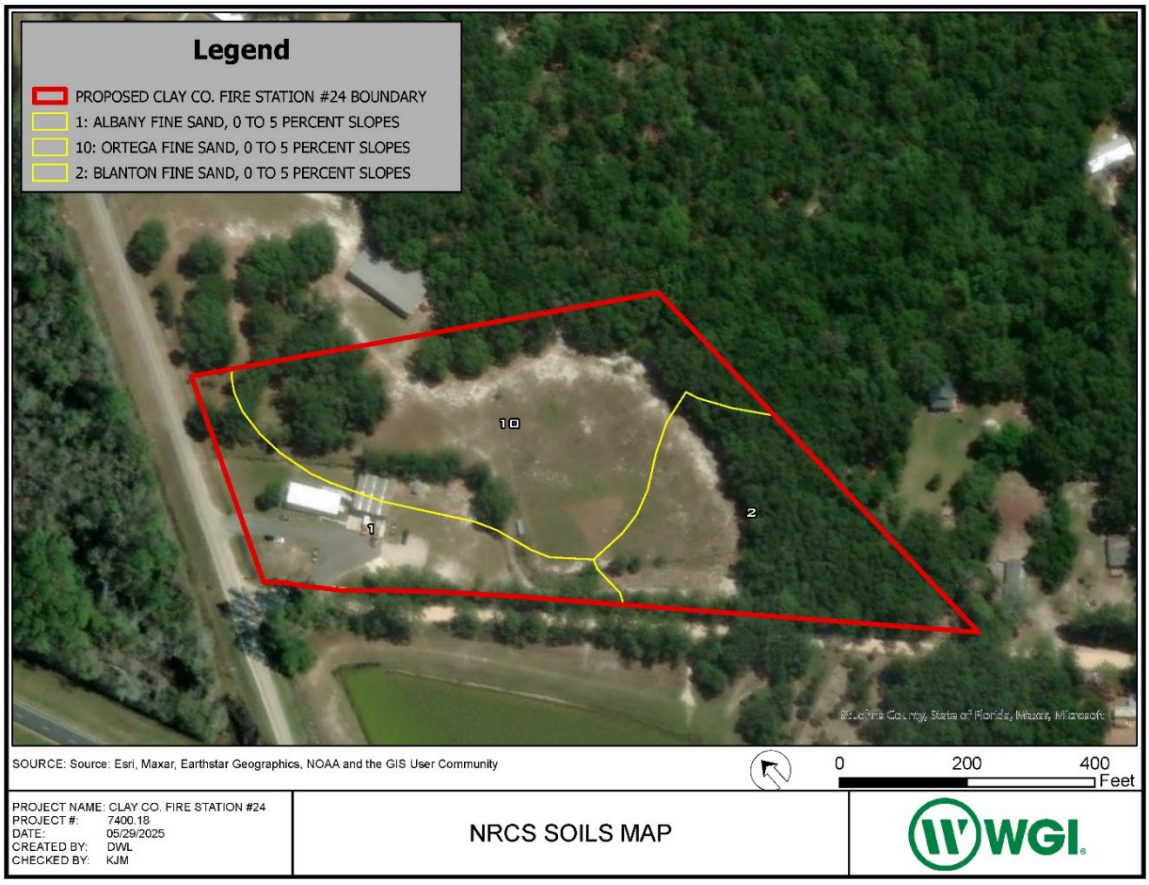

Figure 5.1 NRCS Soils Map

Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

Alternative 1: No Action

The No Action alternative would have no effect to geology and soils because no changes to the project area would occur.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would have soil disturbance with the installation of a new larger septic system and some soil disturbance associated with structure foundations and underground utilities. There are no rare or sensitive geological features or soils; therefore, the project would not have a significant impact on geology or soils.

5.1.2. PRIME FARMLAND

The Farmlands Protection Policy Act (FPPA) of 1981 (P.L. 97-98) is a U.S. law designed to minimize the extent to which federal programs contribute to the unnecessary conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses (7 U.S.C. 4201 et seq.). It essentially ensures that federal projects take steps to avoid unnecessary development on valuable agricultural land when planning new developments like roads or buildings; it aims to align with state and local efforts to protect farmland as well. The policy of the NRCS is to protect significant agricultural lands from conversions that are irreversible and result in the loss of an essential food and environmental resource. For the purpose of FPPA, farmland includes prime farmland, unique farmland, and land of statewide or local importance. Farmland subject to FPPA requirements does not have to be currently used for cropland. It can be forest land, pastureland, cropland, or other land, but not water or urban built-up land. NRCS has developed criteria for assessing the effects of federal actions on converting farmland to other uses, including a Farmland Conversion Impact Rating form AD-1066 that documents a site-scoring evaluation process to assess its potential agricultural value.

Existing Conditions

According to the USDA Soil Data Access (SDA) (USDA 2025), there is no prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, or farmland of local importance on the site.

Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

Alternative 1: No Action

The No Action alternative would have no impact on prime farmland because there is no prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, or farmland of local importance on the site. Further, the No Action alternative would have no effect because no changes to the project area would occur.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would have no impact on prime farmland because there is no prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, or farmland of local importance on the site. The proposed action will have no disruption or displacement of prime farmland; thus, no mitigation is needed.

5.1.3. AIR QUALITY

The Clean Air Act (CAA) of 1970 (42 USC 7401–7661 [2009]) is a comprehensive federal law that regulates air emissions from area, stationary, and mobile sources. The act authorized the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to establish National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) to protect public health and the environment. The NAAQS includes standards for six criteria air pollutants: lead, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and particulate matter (including both particulate matters less than 10 micrometers in diameter [PM10], and fine particulate matter less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter [PM2.5]). Areas where the monitored concentration of a criteria pollutant exceeds the applicable NAAQS are designated as being in non-attainment of the standards; while areas where the monitored concentration of a criteria pollutant is below the standard are classified as in attainment. Non-attainment areas can be re-designated as a maintenance area if monitoring data demonstrates that a non-attainment area meets the NAAQS and a 10-year plan for continuing to meet and maintain such standards is implemented.

Existing Conditions

According to Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)'s 2006 Air Monitoring Report, the EPA designated Florida attainment for all criteria pollutants in 2006, meaning criteria air pollutants do not exceed the national ambient air quality standards.

Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

Alternative 1: No Action

The No Action alternative would have no effect on air quality because no changes to the project area would occur.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

During project construction, typical construction equipment, haul trucks, work vehicle traffic, and other construction related equipment would impact air quality through increasing equipment and dust emissions. However, these impacts are expected to be short in duration during construction and negligible in the long term for operations activities. There would be negligible impacts from construction activities.

During operation, the station will operate in much the same capacity as in the past. As the number of rescue vehicles and number of emergencies and vehicle emissions will be comparable to current conditions, the Proposed Action will have negligible impacts to air quality.

5.2. WATER RESOURCES

5.2.1. WATER QUALITY

Congress enacted the Federal Water Pollution Control Act in 1948, which was later reorganized and expanded in 1972 and became known as the Clean Water Act (CWA) in 1977. The CWA regulates

discharge of pollutants into water with sections falling under the jurisdiction of the USACE and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Section 404 of the CWA establishes the USACE permit requirements for discharging dredged or fill materials into Waters of the United States and traditional navigable waterways. USACE regulation of activities within navigable waters is also authorized under the 1899 Rivers and Harbors Act.

Under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), the EPA regulates both point and non-point pollutant sources, including stormwater and stormwater runoff. Activities that disturb one (1) acre of ground or more are required to apply for an NPDES permit through FDEP as authorized by the EPA. This Section 401 water quality certification is required when obtaining a CWA 404 Permit. As part of this permit, the proponent of the project is required to prepare and implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), which outlines BMPs and engineering controls to be used to prevent and minimize erosion, sedimentation, and pollution during construction. The threshold level for a significant impact to surface water would be a violation of state water quality criteria, a violation of federal or state discharge permits, or an unpermitted dredge or fill within the boundary of a jurisdictional waterbody or wetland. Section 1424(e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 [PL 93–523] authorizes EPA to designate an aquifer for special protection under the sole source aquifer program if the aquifer is the sole or principal drinking water resource for an area (i.e., it supplies 50 percent or more of the drinking water in a particular area) and if its contamination would create a significant hazard to public health. No commitment for federal financial assistance may be provided for any project that EPA determines may contaminate a sole source aquifer such that a significant hazard to public health is created.

Existing Conditions

The site is located in the Clarks Creek Watershed HUC 030801030804 which encompasses 56,332 acres. The primary water sources for Green Cove Springs are five (5) public supply wells that receive water from the Floridan Aquifer at a depth of approximately 1,000 feet below the ground surface. In addition to the public supply wells, 2022 federal and state databases listed seven (7) private water supply wells in the vicinity of the Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24 project area. According to the EPA's Sole Source Aquifers mapper (EPA 2025a), the Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24 project area is not within the vicinity of a mapped sole source aquifer.

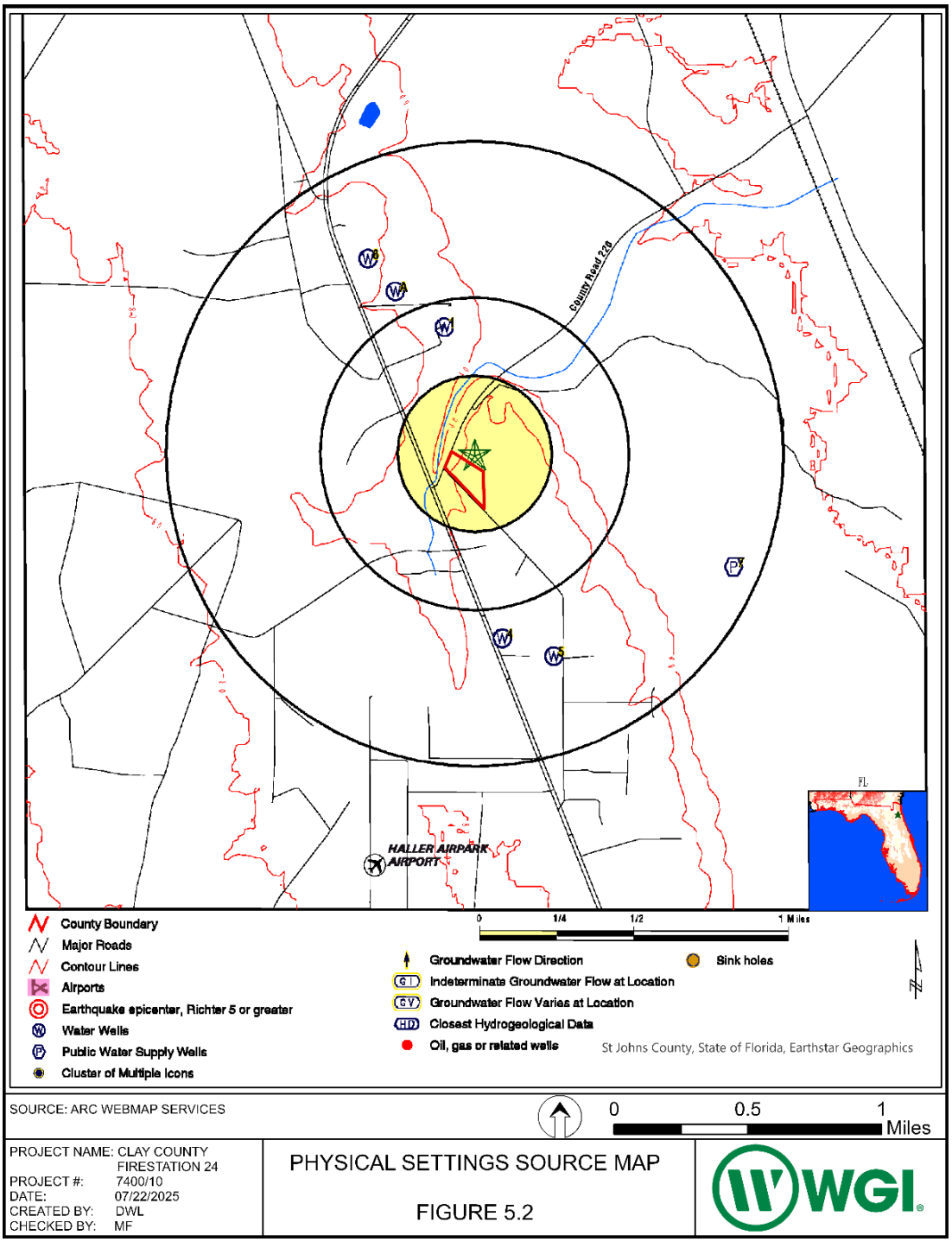

Figure 5.2 Physical Settings Source Map

Alternative 1: No Action

The No Action alternative would have no effect to water quality because no changes to the project area would occur.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The new fire rescue station will require an Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) from the St. John's River Water Management District (SJRWMD); this will ensure the designed stormwater management system will meet the water quality and water quantity requirements of the State of Florida.

The addition of the new water wells and plugging of the old water well will require the project to obtain a State of Florida Permit(s) to Construct, Repair, Modify, or Abandon a Well.

Before the commencement of ground disturbing activities, SWPP BMPs will be implemented to comply with a FDEP-issued NPDES Generic Permit to minimize the risks of project-related water quality issues, such as turbidity from the site during construction; therefore, the project is expected to have negligible impacts due to construction activities. The disturbed surfaces will be revegetated post construction to control pollutants leaving the site throughout the project's lifecycle.

The Proposed Action is not within the vicinity of a mapped sole source aquifer according to EPA's Sole Source Aquifers mapper (EPA 2025a); therefore, the Proposed Action will have no effect on sole source aquifers.

5.2.2. FLOODPLAINS

Executive Order (EO) 11988: Floodplain Management, as implemented in 44 CFR Part 9, requires federal agencies to "avoid to the extent possible the long- and short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains and to avoid direct or indirect support of floodplain development wherever there is a practicable alternative." Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs) are areas that have special flood, mudflow, or flood-related erosion hazards and will be inundated with water in the event of a 100-year (base) flood, which is a flood that has a 1 percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in magnitude in any given year. SFHAs are also referred to as the 100-year floodplain. The 500-year floodplain is the area covered by water in the event of a 500-year flood, which is a flood that has a 0.2 percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in magnitude in any given year. Moderate flood hazard areas are those areas between the limits of the 100- and 500-year floodplains. Areas of minimal flood hazard fall outside of the SFHA (100-year floodplain) and are higher than the elevation of the 0.2-percent-chance annual flood (500- year floodplain). SFHAs, moderate flood hazard areas, areas of minimal flood hazard, and both the 100- and 500-year floodplains are mapped on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs).

Existing Conditions

The project is located within FIRM panel 12019C0295E effective March 17, 2014, Clay County, Florida according to FEMA's National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL) Viewer (FEMA 2025a). The area is mapped in unshaded Flood Zone X, which is defined as an area of minimal flood risk outside of the 100-year

floodplain and higher in elevation than the 500-year floodplain. An area to the west of County Road 226 is mapped as Zone A, which is defined as a SFHA within the 100-year floodplain but is approximately fifty (50) feet outside of the proposed project limits (**Figure 5.2**).

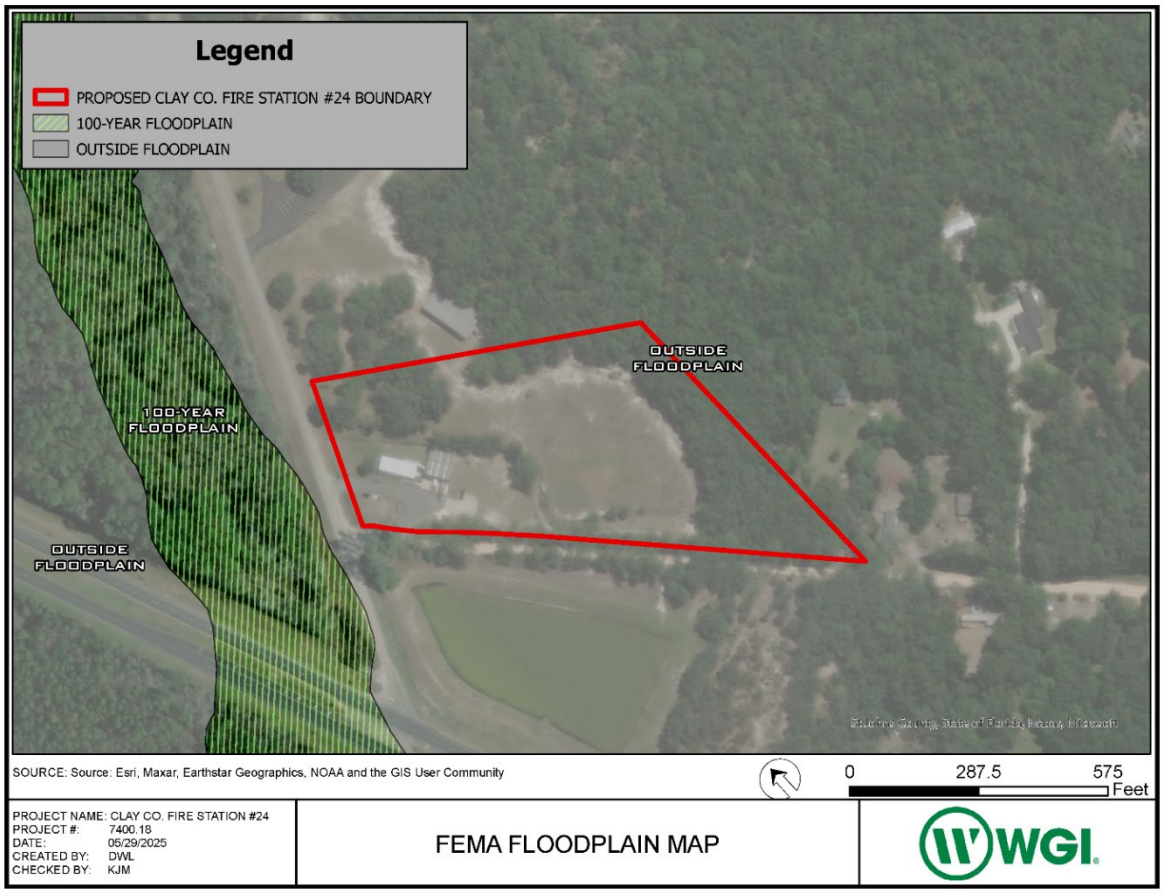

Figure 5.3 FEMA Floodplain Map

Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

Alternative 1: No Action

The No Action alternative would have no effect on the floodplain because no changes to the project area would occur.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The Proposed Action is not located within the100- or 500-yearfloodplain; therefore, there would be no direct impacts to floodplains.

5.2.3. WETLANDS

Executive Order (EO) 11990: Protection of Wetlands requires Federal agencies to avoid funding activities that directly or indirectly support occupancy, modification, or development of wetlands, whenever there are practicable alternatives. FEMA uses the 8-step decision-making process to evaluate potential effects on, and mitigate impacts to, wetlands and floodplains in compliance with EO 11990 and EO 11988.

Section 404 of the CWA governs discharge of pollutants into water with sections falling under the jurisdiction of the USACE and EPA. Section 404 of the CWA establishes the USACE permit requirements for discharging dredged or fill materials into Waters of the United States and traditional navigable waterways. USACE regulation of activities within navigable waters is also authorized under the 1899 Rivers and Harbors Act. Should a project have discharges to jurisdictional waters of the U.S., the project may require a USACE permit. In addition, all waters are considered waters of the state; any dredge or fill proposed within waters of the State of Florida may require an ERP from FDEP or one (1) of Florida's five (5) water management districts (WMDs).

Existing Conditions

A review of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetland Inventory (NWI) (USFWS 2025a) did not list any wetland features within the project area. A site reconnaissance by WGI was performed in May 2025, and wetlands were not encountered.

Offsite, two (2) mapped features, one west and one south of the project, were listed. The feature to the west is mapped as Palustrine, Forested, Broad-Leaved Deciduous, Seasonally Flooded (PFO1C) and a detention pond south of the project is mapped as Palustrine, Unconsolidated Bottom, Permanently Flooded, Excavated (PUBHx) (**Figure 5.3**).

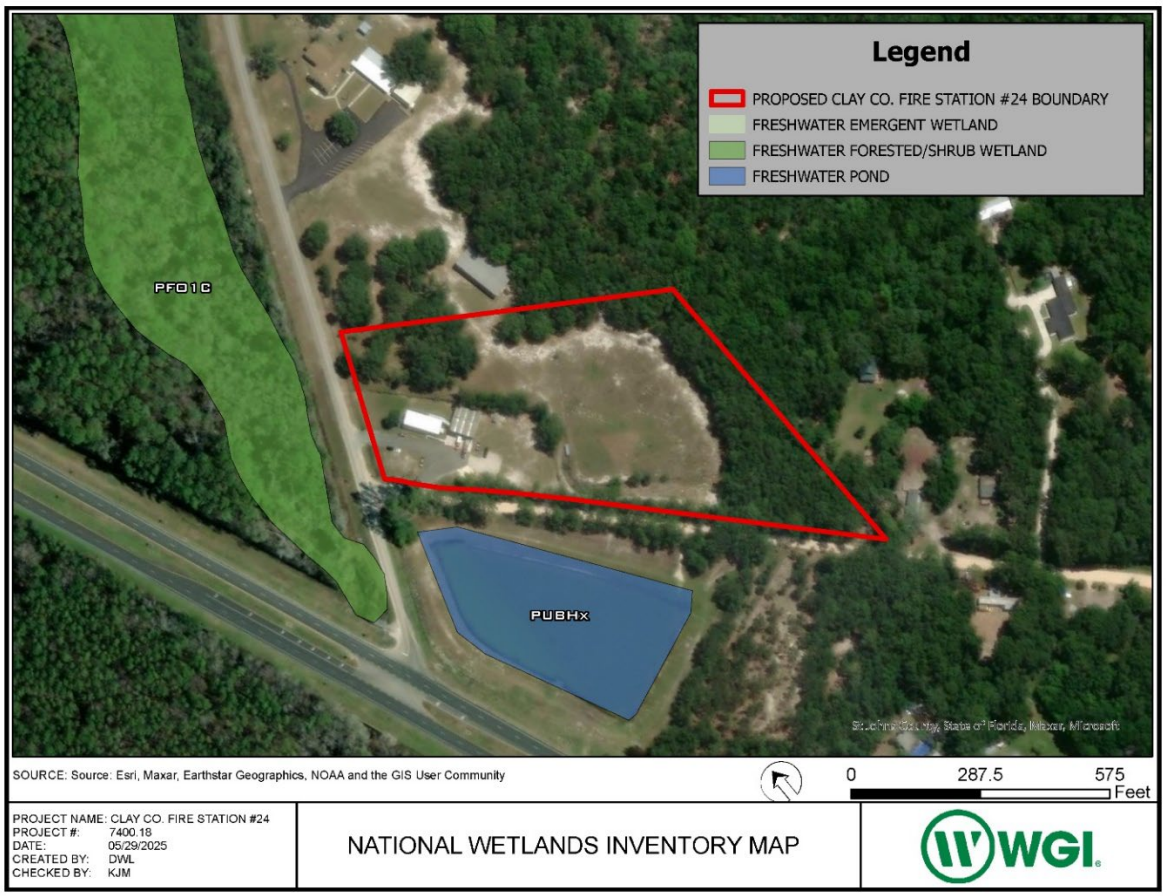

Figure 5.4 NWI Map

Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

Alternative 1: No Action

The No Action alternative would have no effect to wetlands because no changes to the project area would occur.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The project area does not contain wetlands or other water features and, thus, the project will have no effect on wetlands or other waters of the U.S.

5.3. COASTAL RESOURCES

5.3.1. COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT ACT (CZMA)

The Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), administered by states with shorelines in coastal zones, requires those states to have a Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) to manage coastal

development. Projects falling within designated coastal zones must be evaluated to ensure they are consistent with the CZMP. Projects receiving federal assistance must follow the procedures outlined in 15 CFR 930.90 – 930.101 for federal coastal zone consistency determinations. In order to guide development and resource management within the Florida's coastal area, substantive policies have been identified and promulgated by FDEP. The Florida Coastal Management Program (FCMP) is a network of statutes that protects Florida's coastal resources. FDEP implements federal consistency reviews through the Florida State Clearinghouse or its permitting process.

FDEP's Coastal Construction Control Line (CCCL) Program regulates structures and activities that are seaward of established CCCLs and have the potential to cause beach erosion, dune destabilization, damage to upland properties, and/or interference with public access. CCCLs delineate the limits of beach-dune systems that are subject to severe fluctuations based on a 100-year storm surge, storm waves, or other predictable weather conditions. CCCLs have been established in twenty-five (25) of Florida's coastal counties that have sandy beaches fronting the Atlantic Ocean, the Gulf of America, the Straits of Florida, or associated inlets. An FDEP JCP is required for activities located on Florida's natural sandy beaches that extend seaward of the mean high-water line, extend into sovereign submerged lands, and are likely to affect the distribution of sand along the beach. The Joint Coastal Permit (JCP) Program combines the regulatory requirements of the CCCL Program with the ERP Program, enabling activities that would have required both a CCCL permit and ERP permit to be authorized by a JCP.

Existing Conditions

For the purposes of the CZMA, the entire state of Florida is considered a coastal zone; however, the project location falls within a county with no ocean coastline that is, accordingly, landward of established CCCLs.

Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

Alternative 1: No Action

The No Action alternative would have no effect on coastal resources because no changes to the project area would occur.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The project location falls within a county with no ocean coastline, landward of established CCCLs; therefore, the Proposed Action would have no impact on the coastal zone. Coordination with FDEP's Florida State Clearinghouse occurred and confirmed that the project is consistent with the FCMP. The letter is provided in Appendix B.3.

5.3.1. COASTAL BARRIER RESOURCE ACT (CBRA) / COASTAL BARRIER IMPROVEMENT ACT (CBIA) OF 1990

The Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA) of 1982 and Coastal Barrier Improvement Act (CBIA) of 1990 were designed to address problems caused by coastal barrier development by restricting most Federal expenditures and financial assistance for such development. The three (3) established goals of CBRA

are to minimize loss of human life by discouraging development in high-risk areas, reduce wasteful expenditure of federal resources, and protect the natural resources associated with coastal barriers. CBRA created designated areas, Coastal Barrier Resources System (CBRS) Units, under the jurisdiction of the USFWS that are ineligible for both direct and indirect federal expenditures. CBIA reauthorized CBRA and the establishment of new units. CBIA, in addition to the CBRA, designated a new category of coastal barrier lands "otherwise protected areas" (OPAs). OPAs are areas established under federal, state, or local law, or held by a qualified organization used primarily for wildlife refuge, sanctuary, recreation, or natural resource conservation purposes.

Existing Conditions

The project area is not located within a CBRS Unit or OPA.

Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

Alternative 1: No Action

The No Action alternative would have no effect on CBRS Units or OPAs because no changes to the project area would occur.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The Proposed Action is not within a CBRS Unit or OPA; therefore, there would be no effect on the coastal barrier system.

5.4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

5.4.1. THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 (16. U.S.C. 1532 et seq.), and its implementing regulations 50 CFR Part 402, provides for the conservation of threatened and endangered plants and animals, as well as their habitats. USFWS and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) are the lead Federal Agencies implementing the ESA. The law requires Federal agencies to ensure that actions they authorize, fund, or carry out are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat of such species. Section 9 of the ESA makes it unlawful for any person, including private and public entities, to "take" federally listed species. The word "take" is defined as "means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect a species, or attempt to engage in any such conduct".

Existing Conditions

In accordance with Section 7 of the ESA, the project was evaluated for potential impacts to federally listed threatened and endangered species that may be present in the project area. Through an IPaC (Information for Planning and Consultation) review, five (5) federally listed species were identified within the vicinity of the project area. As best available data does not support their presence in the

project area and/or the species are rare due to a lack of respective suitable habitat, FEMA made a determination of no effect for the Eastern black rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis ssp. Jamaicensis*), whooping crane (*Grus americana*), and tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*), the latter of which is proposed to be listed as endangered. FEMA made a determination of may affect, but not likely to adversely affect (MANLAA) for the remaining two (2) species--the Everglade snail kite (*Rostrhamus socialbilis plumbeus*) and Eastern Indigo Snake (*Drymarchon couperi*). FEMA initiated informal consultation with USFWS on September 18, 2024 (Appendix A). USFWS provided their concurrence with FEMA's determinations on February 27, 2025. WGI verified in May 2025 that there has been no change to the list of relevant species protected under the ESA.

The project was also evaluated for State of Florida-designated endangered, threatened, or species of special concern that are known to occur or are likely to occur within the project area. These evaluations were conducted utilizing multiple available resources including Geographic Information System (GIS) databases, desktop determination of potentially suitable habitats, as well as field reconnaissance. Relevant database searches included the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI), and various other datasets that have been compiled by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). A site reconnaissance was performed in May 2025. Based on the project analysis and on-site reconnaissance, federal and state listed species that are known to, or may potentially occur within the project area are provided in Table 5.1. The project is not located within the federal consultation area for any listed species, and it does not intersect with any federally designated critical habitat areas.

Table 5.1 Federal and State-Listed Species in Clay County

Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status	Probability of Occurrence	Habitat Preference
Tricolored Bat	*Perimyotis subflavus*	PFE	PFE	High	Agnostic: May seek shelter in foliage, dead leaf clusters or dense vegetation. They prefer oak and maple trees. Will utilize man-made structures such as barns and bridges.
Eastern Black Rail	*Laterallus jamaicensis ssp. jamaicensis*	T	FT	Low	Prefers dense vegetative cover within moist to saturated soils, and shallow water. Both tidal and non-tidal freshwater and saltwater marsh
Everglades Snail Kite	*Rostrhamus sociabilis plumbeus*	E	FE	Low	Habitat consists of freshwater marshes and shallow vegetated edges of natural and manmade lakes

					with populations of apple snails.
Whooping Crane	*Grus americana*	EP	FE	Low	Habitat preference is shallow freshwater wetlands, rivers, grain fields. Preference varies depending on breeding, wintering, and migration needs.
Bald Eagle	*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*	M	M	Low	Bald eagles prefer large bodies of open water for food and secure nesting. They prefer tall trees for nesting and perching.
Eastern Indigo Snake	*Drymarchoncorias couperi*	T	T	Low	Habitat includes Xeric slash pine plantations, flatwoods, hammocks, dry glades, stream bottoms, cane fields, riparian thickets, and high ground with well-drained sandy soils.
Monarch Butterfly	*Danaus plexippus*	C		Low	Habitat preference favors various species of milkweed for breeding. They favor a preference for sites with adequate sunlight and access to slow-moving water sources.
Black Creek Crayfish	*Procambarus pictus*	PFE	PFE	Low	Habitat consists of cool, slow, sand-bottomed, and tannic-stained streams. The crayfish requires aquatic vegetation and debris for shelter.
Gopher Tortoise	*Gopherus polyphemus*	RT	T	High	Habitat preference consists of well-drained, sandy soils found in habitats such as longleaf pine sandhills, xeric oak hammocks, scrub, pine flatwoods, dry prairies, and coastal dunes. Periodic

					natural fires historically played an important role in many of the habitats where tortoises are found, as fire reduces canopy cover and promotes growth of herbaceous forage plants.
Gopher Tortoise	*Gopherus polyphemus*	RT	T	High	Habitat preference consists of well-drained, sandy soils found in habitats such as longleaf pine sandhills, xeric oak hammocks, scrub, pine flatwoods, dry prairies, and coastal dunes. Periodic natural fires historically played an important role in many of the habitats where tortoises are found, as fire reduces canopy cover and promotes growth of herbaceous forage plants.

Notes: T*= threatened based upon similarity of appearance to other listed species, T = threatened, E=endangered, PFE= proposed federally endangered, PT = proposed threatened, EP = experimental population, M= managed under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, C= candidate species; CH = critical habitat; RT = regionally threatened Source: USFWS

Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

Alternative 1: No Action

The No Action alternative would have no effect to threatened and endangered species because no changes to the project area would occur.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

USFWS evaluated potential impacts of the project on threatened and endangered species through informal Section 7 of the ESA consultation and concurred with FEMA's determination of may affect, not likely to adversely affect (MANLAA) the Everglade snail kite and eastern indigo snake and no effect to the eastern black rail, whooping crane, and tricolored bat with three (3) special conditions to be implemented during project-related activities.

USFWS' determination of compliance with Section 7 of the ESA is contingent upon three (3) special conditions. The conditions are: 1) The project will minimize the extent of habitat clearing to only what is necessary for the construction. Areas of undisturbed habitat near the site will be preserved to maintain potential shelter and foraging opportunities for the Eastern indigo snake; 2) During project construction, anyone (construction crews, contractors, applicants, etc.) involved on-site is prohibited to kill any snakes encountered. Additionally, it is required to report any large black snakes (with a photo if possible) that appear within the project construction area; and 3) If all tree removal for this project is carried out between December 15 and February 15, no further consultation will be necessary for the tri-colored bat. If this timing is not achievable and no other measures to avoid adverse effect are possible, then we recommend that you proceed to acoustic survey to determine presence or probable absence of tri-colored bats.

Multiple gopher tortoise burrows were observed during site reconnaissance. Many of these burrows were determined to be potentially active. Due to the proposed site plan, relocation of the existing population to a State approved recipient site is anticipated.

A formal gopher tortoise burrow survey will be conducted in accordance with FWC's Gopher Tortoise Permitting Guidelines (FWC 2023) prior to construction. The survey will identify gopher tortoise burrows that are located within the Project's construction footprint. If necessary, the applicant will apply for and obtain from FWC a permit to relocate all tortoises in the construction footprint to a State approved recipient site.

5.4.2. VEGETATION

Vegetation is defined as the plant life or total plant cover of a given area. The type of vegetation in an area is influenced by environmental factors such as soil texture, depth, and landform type. Vegetation is important for the overall health of an environment and its biodiversity. Vegetation provides habitat and foraging opportunities for a number of organisms, including threatened and endangered species. Executive Order 13112, Invasive Species, requires federal agencies, to the extent practicable, to prevent the introduction of invasive species and provide for their control and to minimize the economic, ecological, and human health impacts that invasive species cause. Invasive species prefer disturbed habitats and generally possess high dispersal abilities, enabling them to out-compete native species.

Per the County's Land Development Code (LDC), removal of protected trees in the County requires payment of the fee necessary to replace the total tree points accumulated as a result of survey data, measured as diameter at breast height (DBH) in inches, with the same caliper inches of standard replacement trees according to the current fee schedule (Clay County, 2025). The Design Standards Manual included in the LDC defines the types of trees that are protected and outlines the requirements for tree removal and replacement in the County.

Existing Conditions

Three (3) land classifications are mapped in the project area per the Florida Land Use Cover Classification (**Figure 5.4**). Classification includes Residential, Low Density, Improved Pastures, and Upland Mixed Coniferous/Hardwood. A site reconnaissance was performed in May 2025. Existing vegetation within the property primarily consists of maintained grass throughout the southeastern

portion of the already developed portion of the site. Patchy tree cover is present north of the already developed area, increasing in density across the northern boundary of the site. The relic softball field area consists of naturally recruited grasses, mainly chalk bluestem (*Andropogon virginiana*). The patchy tree areas consist primarily of laurel oak (*Quercus laurifolia*). The patchy wooded areas transition to a more of a dense community along the northern boundary traversing to the southeast. Within the more densely wooded area is a more diverse community consisting of a mix of laurel oaks, slash pine (*Pinus elliottii*), and water oak (*Quercus nigra*).

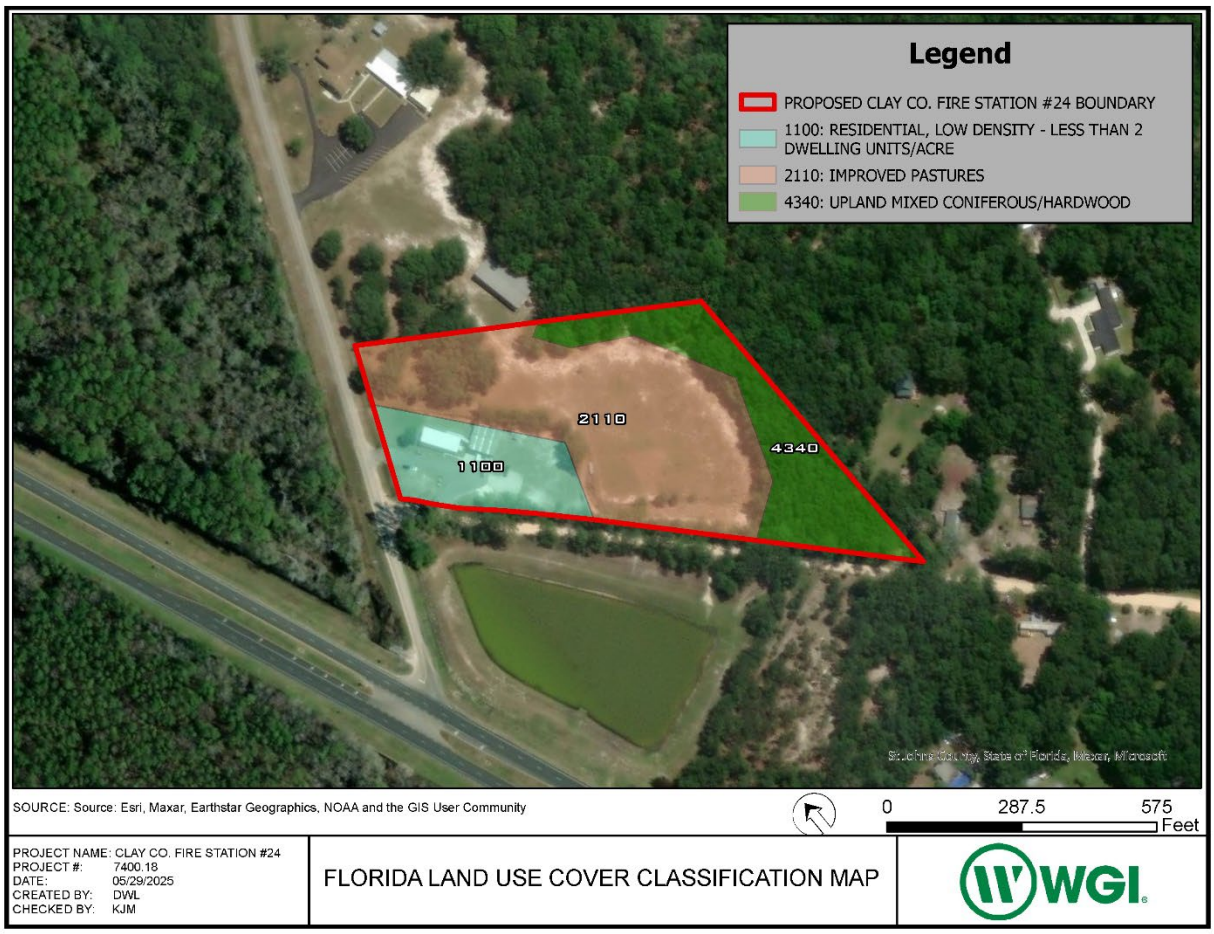

Figure 5.5 Vegetation Map

Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

Alternative 1: No Action

The No Action alternative would have no effect on vegetation because no changes to the project area would occur.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The site development of the proposed action would require the removal of eighty-nine (89) trees and a portion of the existing vegetation on site. The majority of the forested area to the southeast is to remain untouched by the current design. A tree survey identified all trees including heritage or specimen trees. Removal of trees would require applicant to plant additional trees to offset trees loss or pay an in-lieu fee in accordance with the tree replacement requirements of the LDC. The required in-lieu fee payment would be based on the actual number and condition of protected trees removed. Vegetation planting would be incorporated into the design of the Proposed Action and deter invasive species growth. The landscape architecture plans for the Proposed Action address the LDC and provide all required plantings to offset tree points. The existing trees that will be preserved will be protected with barriers during construction to avoid injury to the trees. The Proposed Action will have a minor effect on vegetation due to removal of trees due to the additional planting of trees for the project. Therefore, no additional in lieu fee will be required to offset canopy loss.

5.4.3. ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT

The Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) were made final January 17, 2002 (67 Federal Register 2343). As defined in that final rule, EFH means those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity. For the purpose of interpreting the definition of EFH, "waters" include aquatic areas and their associated physical, chemical, and biological properties that are used by fish, and may include aquatic areas historically used by fish, where appropriate; "substrate" includes sediment, hard bottom, structures underlying the waters, and associated biological communities; "necessary" means the habitat required to support a sustainable fishery and the managed species' contribution to a healthy ecosystem; and "spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity" covers a species' full life cycle. Federal agencies are required to assess the potential impacts that proposed actions and alternatives may have on EFH, in accordance with MSA.

Existing Conditions

The project area is located entirely in uplands and does not contain rivers, streams, lakes, or ponds.

Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

Alternative 1: No Action

The Proposed Action does not occur within a mapped EFH; therefore, there would be no effect to EFH. Further, the No Action alternative would have no effect on EFH because no changes to the project area would occur.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The Proposed Action does not occur within mapped EFH; therefore, there would be no effect on EFH.

5.4.4. MIGRATORY BIRDS

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918 provides a program for the conservation of migratory birds that fly through lands of the United States. The lead Federal agency for implementing the MBTA is the USFWS. The law makes it illegal for anyone to "pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill, attempt to take, capture, or kill, possess, offer for sale, sell, offer to barter, barter, offer to purchase, purchase, deliver for shipment, ship, export, import, cause to be shipped, exported, or imported, deliver for transportation, transport or cause to be transported, carry or cause to be carried, or receive for shipment, transportation, carriage, or export, any migratory bird, any part, nest, or egg of any such bird, or any product, whether or not manufactured, which consists, or is composed in whole or part, of any such bird or any part, nest, or egg thereof." "Take" is defined at 10 C.F.R. 10.12 as "to pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect," or any attempt to carry out these activities.

Existing Conditions

The entire state of Florida is considered a flyway zone for migratory birds. Florida serves as a vital stopover, wintering ground, and breeding habitat within the Atlantic Flyway for millions of migratory birds, including shorebirds and waterfowl.

The existing vegetation within the project area primarily consists of maintained grass throughout the southeastern portion of the already-developed portion of the site. Patchy tree cover is present north of the already developed area, increasing in density across the northern boundary of the site. The relic softball field area consists of native grasses, mainly chalk bluestem. The patchy tree areas consist primarily of laurel oak. The patchy wooded areas transition to a more of a dense community along the northern boundary traversing to the southeast. Within the more densely wooded area is a more diverse community consisting of a mix of laurel oaks, slash pine, and water oak.

The vegetation provides some suitable habitat for foraging and nesting of some species of common birds on the MBTA. Such species include, but are not limited to, northern mockingbirds, blue jays, and other passerine species.

Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

Alternative 1: No Action

The No Action alternative would have no effect on migratory birds because no changes to the project area would occur.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The Proposed Action will require removal of eighty-nine (89) tree and shrubs to construct the new fire rescue station. The Proposed Action will also remove part of the relic softball field. To avoid disturbing nesting migratory birds, trees, shrubs, and structural removal should be conducted outside of nesting season (typically March – October) and as such would have no effect on migratory birds.

If vegetation removal outside of nesting season is not feasible, then a nest survey should be conducted to verify if active nests are present on the property before vegetation & structural removal. Should

active nests be encountered, a buffer should be placed around the nest until the young fledge for the proposed action to have no effect on migratory birds.

5.5. CULTURAL RESOURCES

As a Federal agency, FEMA must consider the potential effects of its actions upon cultural resources prior to engaging in any undertaking. This obligation is defined in Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), as amended, and implemented by 36 CFR Part 800. The NHPA of 1966 defines a historic property as "any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in, or eligible for inclusion on the National Register." Eligibility criteria for listing a property on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) are found at 36 C.F.R. Part 60. Tribal resources are protected under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) on federal lands. NAGPRA directs federal agencies to provide written summaries, initiate tribal consultation, and either repatriate or dispose through other measures any discovered Native American human remains or funerary objects from federal lands or utilizing federal funds to Federally Recognized Tribes. AIRFA directs federal agencies to protect tribal rights of religious freedom, including access to and use of sites and sacred objects on federal lands. The Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) was signed into law in 1979. ARPA, as amended, provides tools to protect archaeological resources on public and Native American lands. These tools include (but are not limited to): permitting for archaeological investigations on federal or public lands; identification of prohibited activities, enforcement, and criminal prosecution for violations; prohibition of the sale, purchase, or transport of any archaeological resource or artifact; and prohibition of public disclosure of any information about archaeological resources (including location).

While tribal consultation is included under Section 106 of the NHPA, EO 13175: Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, further specifies that federal agencies must consult with Federally Recognized Tribal Nations during decision-making processes that have the potential to impact tribal communities.

The Florida Division of Historic Resources (DHR) Florida Master Site File (FMSF) maintains a database of Florida's historic properties and archaeological sites. This database is regularly updated, in part, on the basis of reports prepared by cultural resources professionals in advance of construction projects that are subject to State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and federal agency review, as well as by FEMA's Office of Environmental Planning & Historic Preservation (OEHP). Requirements for review include the identification of significant cultural resources that may be impacted by the undertaking. Cultural resources include prehistoric and historic sites, structures, districts, buildings, objects, artifacts, or any other physical evidence of human activity considered important to a culture, subculture, or community for scientific, traditional, religious, or other reasons. Only those cultural resources determined to be potentially significant under NHPA are subject to protection from adverse impacts resulting from an undertaking. To be considered significant, a cultural resource must meet one or more of the criteria established by the National Park Service (NPS) that would make that resource eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The term "eligible for inclusion in the NRHP" includes all properties that meet the NRHP listing criteria, which are specified

in the Department of Interior regulations Title 36, Part 60.4 and NRHP Bulletin 15. Sites that have not been evaluated at the time of the undertaking may be considered potentially eligible for inclusion in the NRHP and, as such, are afforded the same regulatory consideration as nominated properties.

Pursuant to 36 CFR 800.4(a)(1) and 36 CFR 800.16.(d), the Area of Potential Effects (APE) is defined as the geographic area(s) within which the undertaking may directly or indirectly affect cultural resources. Within the APE, impacts to cultural resources are evaluated prior to the undertaking for both Standing Structures (above ground resources) and Archaeology (below ground resources).

FEMA, the FL State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM), and Alabama Coushatta Tribe of Texas, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, and Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians have executed a Statewide Programmatic Agreement dated September 10, 2014, and amended September 9, 2021; September 8, 2022; September 1, 2023; and September 05, 2024, to streamline the Section 106 review process. Per the guidelines outlined in the Programmatic Agreement, the undertaking does not meet the allowances agreed upon in Appendix B and, therefore, required consultation with interested parties.

FEMA determined that the APE for the Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24 project is the 6.95-acre project area comprised of two (2) contiguous parcels at 5105 Sweat Road and 1055 County Road 226, Green Cove Springs, Florida, [Parcels 0307-26-015781-001-00 and 03-07-26-015782-001-00; GPS Coordinates: (29.921512, -81.681565)]. Based on the proposed scope of work (SOW), project location, and depth of ground disturbance on previously undisturbed land, FEMA determined that a Phase I archaeological survey within the project area was necessary to initiate Section 106 consultation with the FL SHPO and federally recognized Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) with current and ancestral interest in Clay County, Florida. The Phase I archaeological survey was to be conducted within the limits of construction on both subject parcels that will be impacted by construction and anticipated for future development. FEMA specified that the requisite survey request was to be fulfilled by a Secretary of Interior (SOI)-qualified archaeologist and that the survey and resulting report were to comply with state guidelines for surveys as defined within Florida Administrative Code & Administrative Register and Module Three Guidelines for Use By Historic Preservation Professionals.

In preparation for the demolition and reconstruction of the proposed Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24, Ardurra Cultural Resource Management Group (Ardurra) conducted the *Phase I Cultural Resource Assessment Survey, Clay County Fire Station 24, Green Cove Springs, Clay County, Florida* on for WGI, Inc., on behalf of Clay County In March of 2025, Ardurra subjected the 6.95-acre project area (APE) to a Phase I archaeological survey consisting of pedestrian survey and systematic subsurface sampling through the excavation of thirty-seven (37) shovel test pits (STPs) at 25 m (82 ft), 50 m (164 ft), and 100 m (328ft) intervals based on archaeological potential. STPs were also judgmentally placed throughout the parcel. No archaeological materials were encountered during the Phase I archaeological survey, and Ardurra did not recommend any further archaeological investigations of the Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24 APE.

FEMA identified potential historic properties in the APE utilizing the NPS National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) GIS resource, data from the FMSF historic aerial imagery and topographic maps, and information from previously conducted cultural resource investigations. FEMA's review found there are no historic properties listed or nominated for listing in the NRHP, National Historic Landmarks (NHLs), or archaeological sites determined eligible for listing in the NRHP in the proposed project's APE. The proposed Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24 APE was subjected to the *Phase I Cultural Resource Assessment Survey, Clay County Fire Station 24, Green Cove Springs, Clay County, Florida* and no intact subsurface deposits, surface features, or cultural resources (including properties considered eligible for listing in the NRHP), were encountered as a result of this survey. Based on the results of FEMA's historic property identification efforts, no properties listed in or considered eligible for listing in the NRHP were located within the APE of the proposed Clay County Fire Station #24. Accordingly, FEMA made a finding of No Historic Properties Affected for this undertaking in accordance with 36 CFR 800.4(d)(1).

To ensure that FEMA-funded activities will not adversely affect archaeological resources, FEMA placed two (2) special conditions on the project for the treatment of inadvertent archaeological discoveries during ground disturbing activities within the project area and adherence to *Demolition Best Management Practices for Florida* during project-related activities:

> NHPA Condition 1: If human remains or intact archaeological features or deposits (e.g. protectable points, pottery, glass, metal, etc.) are uncovered, work in the vicinity of the discovery will stop immediately and all reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm to the finds will be taken. The subrecipient will ensure that archaeological discoveries are secured in place, that access to the sensitive area is restricted, and that all reasonable measures are taken to avoid further disturbance of the discoveries. The subrecipient s contractor will provide immediate notice of such discoveries to the applicant. The subrecipient shall contact the Florida Division of Historic Resources and FEMA within 24 hours of the discovery. Work in the vicinity of the discovery may not resume until FEMA has completed consultation with SHPO, Tribes, and other consulting parties as necessary. In the event that unmarked human remains are encountered during permitted activities, all work shall stop immediately and the proper authorities notified in accordance with *Florida Statutes,* Section 872.05.
>
> NHPA Condition 2: The subrecipient shall adhere to the attached *Demolition Best Management Practices for Florida* to minimize potential impacts to historic resources caused by ground disturbing activities. Failure to comply with this condition may jeopardize FEMA funding; verification of compliance by FEMA-EHP will be required at project closeout.

While tribal consultation is included under Section 106 of the NHPA, EO 13175: Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, further specifies that federal agencies must consult with Federally Recognized Tribal Nations during decision-making processes that have the potential to impact tribal communities. There are six (6) Federally Recognized Tribes either in or with interests within the proposed project area. On June 10, 2025, FEMA initiated consultation with the FL SHPO and six (6) THPOs: the Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida,

Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, and Seminole Tribe of Florida. FEMA received concurrence with the both the survey results and recommendations and determination of No Historic Properties Affected from the FL SHPO on July 09, 2025. No objections to the proposed project were expressed by the Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, or Seminole Tribe of Florida. Relevant documentation from the consultation is provided in Appendix **B2**.

5.5.1. VIEWSHED QUALITY AND AESTHETICS

Consideration is given to the loss of, or impact to, any aesthetic resources or viewshed. A viewshed is an area of land, water, or other environmental element that is visible to the human eye from a fixed vantage point. Viewsheds are areas of particular scenic or historic value that have been deemed worthy of preservation against development or other change. They are spaces that are readily visible from public areas and thoroughfares, such as from public roadways, public parks or high-rise buildings. If the viewshed is integral to the setting of a landmark building or part of the NHPA Evaluation Criterion for a building's eligibility, it must be considered for any new development or renovation proposal.

Existing Conditions

FEMA identified potential historic properties in the APE utilizing the National Park Service (NPS) National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) GIS resource, data from the FMSF, historic aerial imagery and topographic maps, and information from previously conducted cultural resource investigations. FEMA's review found there are no historic properties listed or nominated for listing in the NRHP, National Historic Landmarks (NHLs), or archaeological sites determined eligible for listing in the NRHP in the proposed project's APE. The proposed Clay County Fire Rescue #24 APE was subjected to the *Phase I Cultural Resource Assessment Survey, Clay County Fire Station 24, Green Cove Springs, Clay County, Florida* and no intact subsurface deposits, surface features, or cultural resources (including properties considered eligible for listing in the NRHP), were encountered as a result of this survey. Based on the results of FEMA's historic property identification efforts, no properties listed in or considered eligible for listing in the NRHP were located within the APE of the proposed Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24 project. Accordingly, FEMA made a finding of No Historic Properties Affected for this undertaking in accordance with 36 CFR 800.4(d)(1).

Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

Alternative 1: No Action

Under the No Action alternative, no impacts to the respective viewsheds of historic structures, buildings, objects, sites, or districts would occur.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

Based on the results of FEMA's historic property identification efforts, no properties listed in or considered eligible for listing in the National Register were located within the APE of this undertaking. FEMA has made a determination of No Historic Properties Affected for the proposed Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24 project. As such, no impacts to the respective viewsheds of historic structures, buildings, objects, sites, or districts would occur.

5.5.2. HISTORIC (STANDING) STRUCTURES

Existing Conditions

FEMA identified potential historic properties in the APE utilizing the NPS National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) GIS resource, data from the FMSF, historic aerial imagery and topographic maps, and information from previously conducted cultural resource investigations. FEMA's review found there are no historic properties listed or nominated for listing in the NRHP or National Historic Landmarks (NHLs) in the proposed project's APE. Based on the results of FEMA's historic property identification efforts, no properties listed in or considered eligible for listing in the NRHP were located within the APE of the proposed Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24 project. Accordingly, FEMA made a finding of No Historic Properties Affected for this undertaking in accordance with 36 CFR 800.4(d)(1).

Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

Alternative 1: No Action

No Action Under the no action alternative, no impacts to historic structures, buildings, objects, or districts would occur.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

Based on the results of FEMA's historic property identification efforts, no properties listed in or considered eligible for listing in the National Register or National Historic Landmarks (NHLs) were located within the APE of this undertaking. FEMA has made a determination of No Historic Properties Affected for the proposed Clay County Fire Station #24 project.

5.5.3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Existing Conditions

FEMA identified potential historic properties in the APE utilizing the National Park Service (NPS) National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) GIS resource, data from the FMSF, historic aerial imagery and topographic maps, and information from previously conducted cultural resource investigations. FEMA's review found there are no historic properties listed or nominated for listing in the NRHP, National Historic Landmarks (NHLs), or archaeological sites determined eligible for listing in the NRHP in the proposed project's APE. The proposed Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24 APE was subjected to the *Phase I Cultural Resource Assessment Survey, Clay County Fire Station 24, Green Cove Springs, Clay County, Florida* and no intact subsurface deposits, surface features, or cultural resources (including properties considered eligible for listing in the NRHP), were encountered as a result of this survey. Based on the results of FEMA's historic property identification efforts, no properties listed in or considered eligible for listing in the NRHP were located within the APE of the proposed Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24 project. Accordingly, FEMA made a finding of No Historic Properties Affected for this undertaking in accordance with 36 CFR 800.4(d)(1).

Prehistoric Archaeological Resources

No pre-contact (prehistoric) archaeological resources were identified within the proposed project's APE.

Historic Archaeological Resources

No historic archaeological resources were identified within the proposed project's APE.

Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation, Archaeological Resources

Alternative 1: No Action

No Action Under the no action alternative, no impacts to historic structures, buildings, objects, or districts would occur.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

Based on the results of FEMA's historic property identification efforts and the *Phase I Cultural Resource Assessment Survey, Clay County Fire Station 24, Green Cove Springs, Clay County, Florida*, no properties listed in or considered eligible for listing in the National Register were located within the APE of this undertaking. FEMA has made a determination of No Historic Properties Affected for Clay County Fire Station #24 project. As such, the proposed project should have no effect to pre-contact (prehistoric) or historic archaeological resources. Two (2) National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) conditions shall be adhered to for the Proposed Action. See Section 5.5 and 7.

5.6. SOCIOECONOMIC RESOURCES

5.6.1. SOCIOECONOMICS

Existing Conditions

Clay County, Florida was reported to have 232,439 residents in 2023 according to U.S. Census Bureau (USCB) data (USBC 2023). The project is located within Clay County Census Tract 315. In 2023, the population of the Census Tract 315 was 2,197. The census tract has a total land area of 80.1 square miles with a population density of 27.4 people per square mile (USCB, 2023). The USCB reported that approximately 59 percent of the population was between 18 years old and 65 years old. Approximately 49 percent of the population was female, and 51 percent of the population was male.

The USCB (2023) reported that 84.7 percent of the population within the census tract are high school graduates. The per capita income from 2019-2023 was approximately $31,832 which is lower than the average for Clay County ($40,207). The median household income for the same time period of $65,492 is less than the amount for Clay County ($81,758). Locally, the per capita income and median household income are less than the Florida statewide average, $41,902 and $73,311, respectively.

The USCB (2023) reported the racial makeup of the community as: approximately 93 percent of the population White; 2 percent of the population Black or African American; 3 percent Hispanic or Latino, 1 percent Asian, and 1 percent Other. None of the population was reported as American Indian, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, or Other Pacific Islander.

Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

Alternative 1: No Action

The No Action alternative will have no disruption or displacement of residents. Therefore, the No Action Alternative will have no effect on community demographics and socioeconomics.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The Proposed Action is replacing an existing rescue fire station with a modern facility. The alternative will have no disruption or displacement of residents. Therefore, the Proposed Action will have no effect on community demographics and socioeconomics.

5.6.2. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Existing Conditions

Existing land use refers to the actual purpose for which a piece of land is currently being used (like residential, commercial, or agricultural). In most cases, the future land use of an area is designated

by local regulatory bodies, such as municipalities or counties, for a specific planning horizon through the development of comprehensive plans and future land use maps. Future land use maps are developed through a public participation process, approved by publicly elected officials, and ideally capture local values and attitudes of planning and future development.

Clay County is responsible for the development and enforcement of the Future Land Use Element of the Clay County 2040 Comprehensive Plan (Clay County 2025). The Future Land Use Map (Clay County 2025a) guides potential future development for designated areas. These documents were used to evaluate the Project's consistency with local future land use. The existing land use of the project area is identified as "County Government" (8600), which is reflective of its current use as a County owned rescue fire station. The future land use of the project area is identified as "Rural Residential" (RR) which is described as areas that will serve as a transition between areas with planned urban services, agriculture/residential areas, and environmentally sensitive areas.

Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

Alternative 1: No Action

The No Action alternative will have no disruption or displacement of existing or planned land use. Therefore, the No Action Alternative will have no effect on land use.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The Clay County Fire Rescue Station #24 replacement would not result in disruption or displacement of existing or planned land use. The Proposed Action would comply with the existing land use of "County Government" as the existing fire rescue station is proposed to be replaced. The proposed action would be consistent with the future land use of "Rural Residential" proposed for the Project area in the Clay County 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Rural Residential areas provide a low-density residential character and the continued use of the property as a fire rescue station along the rural fringe supports and does not alter this character. The Proposed Action will have no disruption or displacement of existing or planned land use thus no mitigation is needed.

5.6.3. ZONING

Existing Conditions

Zoning refers to the set of regulations that govern how land can be used, essentially dictating what types of development are permitted in a specific area. Local regulatory bodies, such as municipalities or counties, utilize zoning as a planning tool for controlling and regulating the function of real estate markets within their jurisdiction. Through zoning, local regulatory authorities and city planners can dictate the particular use, layout, and permitting of properties to control present use and plan future development in coordination with the designated future land use.

Clay County is responsible for the development and enforcement of the zoning code and the official zoning map (Clay County 2025b). The Clay County zoning code and map specify the permitted land

uses within the property. The project area is currently zoned for "Public Ownership" (PO-1). Public Ownership zoning districts are consistent with the "Rural Residential" land use category per Clay County Zoning Code. The project area is bordered by existing "Agricultural/Residential" zones to the east, west, and south. To the north of the project area is "Private Services" which is designated for religious facilities.

Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

Alternative 1: No Action

The No Action alternative will have no effect on Clay County zoning because no development would occur.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would comply with current Clay County zoning of "Public Ownership" (PO-1). Fire Stations are a permitted use in Public Ownership zoning districts. The Proposed Action would have no short- and long-term effects on zoning as there is no conflict with the zoning in the project area.

5.6.4. NOISE

Noise, defined as undesirable sound, is most commonly measured in decibels (dB). The Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) is an average measure of sound. The DNL descriptor is accepted by federal agencies as a standard for estimating sound impacts and establishing guidelines for compatible land uses. The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 states that employees should not be exposed to sound levels more than 85 dB in an 8-hour period. Under the CAA, the EPA administrator established the Office of Noise Abatement and Control (ONAC) to carry out investigations and studies on noise and its effect on the public health and welfare. Through ONAC, the EPA coordinated all Federal noise control activities, but in 1981 the Administration concluded that noise issues were best handled at the State and local level. As a result, ONAC was closed and primary responsibility of addressing noise issues was transferred to State and local governments. However, EPA retains authority to investigate and study noise and its effect, disseminate information to the public regarding noise pollution and its adverse health effects, respond to inquiries on matters related to noise, and evaluate the effectiveness of existing regulations for protecting the public health and welfare, pursuant to the Noise Control Act of 1972 and the Quiet Communities Act of 1978.

Existing Conditions

The project area is bordered by SR 226 to the northwest, and southwest of the property is Sweat Road. Further southwest beyond Sweat Road is a stormwater management pond, then US-17. The U.S. Department of Transportation National Transportation Noise Map (USDOT 2020) displays noise pollution in dBA (A-weighted decibels) for a 24-hour LAeq (Equivalent Continuous Sound Pressure Level) period. According to the Noise Map, the two largest sources of noise pollution around the Project are US 17 and North American Rail Network Lines (CSXT) that are located approximately 1.4-miles to

the northeast. Noise pollution for US-17 ranges between 55.0-59.0 dBA and the CSXT rail line ranges between 45.0-49.0 dBA.

Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

Alternative 1: No Action

The No Action alternative would have no effect on noise because no changes to the project area would occur.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

During project construction, typical construction equipment such as haul trucks, work vehicle traffic, and other construction related equipment would increase the level of noise within the project area. The construction activities are estimated to produce noise levels up to 85dB (FHWA 2006). These noise levels are expected to be short in duration and diminish over distance from equipment, so noise effects are expected to be minor during construction. After construction, equipment may be used in a similar manner to which is currently being utilized. Therefore, noise effects would be negligible in the long-term.

5.6.5. TRANSPORTATION

Existing Conditions

Trip generation for the proposed rescue fire station replacing the existing rescue fire station is determined by using Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) *Trip Generation Manual*, 11th Edition (ITE 2021). The increase in trips is assessed against the County's concurrency management system (CMS) to determine if the impacts will be significant.

Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

Alternative 1: No Action

The No Action alternative would have no effect on transportation because no changes to the project area would occur.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

Based on the existing and proposed square footage of the rescue fire station, the daily trip increase of 80 and a 5 peak hour trips increase in the PM peak hour. Table 5.2 summarizes the trip generation.

Table 5.2 Trip Generation Table

ITE Trip Generation							
ITE Land Use	ITE Code	Units		Daily	PM Peak Hour		
				Total	In	Out	Total
Fire and Rescue Station[1]	575	1.96	KSF	10	0	1	1
Total Existing Vehicle Trips				**10**	**0**	**1**	**1**
Fire and Rescue Station[1]	575	16.84	KSF	90	2	6	8
Total Proposed Vehicle Trips				**90**	**2**	**6**	**8**
Total Net New Vehicle Trips				**80**	**2**	**5**	**7**

Note: Data from ITE, Trip Generation, 11th Edition
1. ITE Trip Generation (11th Edition) Land Use Category 575 -Fire and Rescue Station
Daily: T = 0.48*(X)/0.09 (50% in, 50% out)
PM Peak Hour: T = 0.48*(X) (29% in, 71% out)

The Proposed Action will have no effect for County Road 226 or Sweat Road. Neither of these roadways are listed in the County's CMS as being at or near capacity.

5.6.6. PUBLIC SERVICES AND UTILITIES

Existing Conditions

The project area falls into the jurisdiction of Unincorporated Clay County, FL. Clay County is served by municipal police and fire departments and municipal public-school districts. The current use of the site and the use of the Proposed Action is a fire and rescue station. The property is not served by public water or sewer and is not within the Proposed Water Service Area of the County according to the Clay County Water Supply Facilities Plan 2018-2030 (Clay County, 2019). The site is served by Clay Electric Cooperative. The hospital closest to the project site, Kindred Hospital North Florida, is approximately 5.6 miles north. No Jacksonville Transportation Authority, Clay Community Transportation transit lines service the project site.

Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

Alternative 1: No Action

The No Action alternative would have minor short-term and moderate long-term impacts on the ability of people in the surrounding areas to access fire services. The current station does not meet current building standards and as such, the crew must be relocated to safer, modern facilities during tropical or greater storm events. This relocation can cause a delay in response times for emergencies in Green Cove Springs and the surrounding communities within Clay County. The No Action Alternative would have a negligible impact on other public services and utilities.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would have a negligible short-term impact on the ability of people in the surrounding areas to access fire and rescue services as the current crew and equipment will operate in current capacity and function during certain construction phases of the new facility. The Proposed Action would provide major, long-term benefits to public fire and rescue services by modern, reliable, and efficient rescue fire station to respond to local emergencies. The Proposed Action will not impact local utilities or other public services. On site water and sewer and a new septic drain field will be

constructed to contain/treat wastewater for the facility. The stormwater will be managed by a new stormwater retention pond and stormwater system will be constructed to contain and filter stormwater runoff of the property.

5.6.7. PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

EO 13045: Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks, requires that each federal agency make it a high priority to identify and assess environmental health risks and safety risks that may disproportionately affect children and ensure that its policies, programs, activities, and standards address disproportionate risks to children that result from environmental health risks or safety risks. Section 2-203 of the EO defines environmental health risks and safety risks as, “risks to health or to safety that are attributable to products or substances that the child is likely to come in contact with or ingest (such as the air we breathe, the food we eat, the water we drink or use for recreation, the soil we live on, and the products we use or are exposed to).”

The primary federal law preventing contamination releases to land is the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), 42 U.S.C. §6901 et seq. (1976). RCRA focuses on controlling the management of hazardous waste, including its treatment, storage, and disposal, from "cradle to grave". It also includes provisions for the cleanup of contaminated land. The Pollution Prevention Act, 42 U.S.C. §13101, et seq. (1990), focuses on preventing pollution at its source rather than managing it after it has been created. The law establishes a national policy that pollution should be prevented or reduced at the source, recycled, or treated in an environmentally safe manner, and disposal should be a last resort. Pollution prevention includes practices that increase efficiency in the use of energy, water, or other natural resources, and protect our resource base through conservation.

In Florida, Chapter 403, Florida Statutes governs state hazard materials and solid waste (SHM&SW) determination, management, permitting, disposal, and recycling. Chapter 62-701, Florida Administrative Code, establishes rules and regulations for solid waste management facilities. FDEP is the state agency with regulatory authority over solid waste management facilities, including disaster debris management sites, transfer stations, landfills, and source-separated organics processing facilities. FDEP issues permits for solid waste management facilities and authorizes the use of disaster debris management sites, assigning each facility a unique Water Assurance Compliance System (WACS) ID number.

Demolition in Clay County, Florida, is primarily regulated by the Florida Building Code and local Clay County ordinances, which aim to ensure safety, proper disposal, and environmental protection. A Clay County demolition permit requires:

- A mandatory pre-demolition written asbestos survey conducted by a Florida-licensed asbestos consultant;
- If asbestos is present, per Florida's Asbestos Program Rule (62-257, F.A.C.), effective March 23, 2025, it may be required to notify the FDEP at least 10 working days prior to commencing demolition activities;
- The survey report must be on-site during demolition;

- All regulated asbestos containing material (ACM) must be removed by a licensed asbestos contractor before demolition begins.

In Florida, lead-based paint regulations are primarily governed by the EPA's Lead Disclosure Rule and the Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP) Rule. Florida statutes focus on disclosure requirements for sellers and landlords of pre-1978 housing and regulations for RRP activities. Florida's regulations exist to protect residents, especially children, from lead poisoning. Certification as a Lead Risk Assessor in Florida requires EPA accreditation through education and training coursework.

Florida law addresses mold-related services, requiring documentation of training in water, mold, and respiratory protection for those performing assessments and remediation. Chapter 468, Florida Statutes requires licensing to perform mold assessment. Per the statute, "mold assessment" is a process, performed by a licensed mold assessor, that includes the physical sampling and detailed evaluation of data obtained from a building's history and inspection. The goal of assessment is to formulate an initial hypothesis about the origin, identity, location, and extent of amplification of mold growth of greater than 10 square feet.

Existing Conditions

WGI reviewed the FDEP's Map Direct database (FDEP 2025) for graphic representation of contaminated facilities located in the vicinity of the site. Specifically, WGI examined the FDEP's Contamination Locator Map, with embedded layers for the Division of Waste Cleanup's ERIC (hazardous substances) and PFAS cleanup facilities. The closest facility is the B&D Feed and Grocery Store located over 2,400 feet north-northwest of the Fire Station 24 site. FDEP records indicate ongoing cleanup from a leaking petroleum storage tank. A gradient map generated from data collected in January 2025 indicates the water table flowing toward the west-southwest, cross-gradient, and away from the Fire Station 24 site. Groundwater plume graphics indicate it is horizontally retained within the boundary of the B&D Feed and Grocery Store facility. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was completed for the project site (WGI 2022). No evidence of recognized environmental conditions was observed on the property and the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment found no evidence of a release of hazardous substances.

Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

Alternative 1: No Action

The No Action alternative would have no effect on hazardous materials because no changes to the project area would occur.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The project area includes the existing rescue fire station and a vacant lot with a remnant, unused softball field. No other structures were located on the property and some minimal scattered debris was observed in the forested area. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was completed for the project site (WGI 2022). No evidence of recognized environmental conditions was observed on the property – the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment found no evidence of a release of hazardous

substances. Hazardous substances used during the course of construction will be contained and disposed of according to local, state, and federal regulations.

Should any release of hazardous substances occur during construction, the release will be contained, removed, and disposed of in accordance with construction contractor spill control procedures. The rescue fire station will operate in a similar manner as in the past so the Proposed Action will have effects to public health or safety.

To ensure that FEMA-funded activities are compliant with state and federal solid waste and hazardous materials laws, FEMA placed four (4) special conditions on the project for the proper handling, management, staging, and disposal of construction and demolition (C&D) debris:

> RCRA Condition 1: Unusable equipment, debris and material shall be disposed of in an approved manner and location. In the event significant items (or evidence thereof) are discovered during implementation of the project, applicant shall handle, manage, and dispose of petroleum products, hazardous materials and toxic waste in accordance with the requirements and to the satisfaction of the governing local, state and federal agencies.
>
> RCRA Condition 2: Subgrantee shall handle, manage, and dispose of potentially hazardous waste, universal waste, and hazardous materials in accordance with the requirements of local, state, and federal regulations. These materials may include, but are not limited to asbestos, lead-based paint, laboratory reagents, propane cylinders, paints and solvents, coolants containing chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), used oil, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), other petroleum products, used oil filters, fuel filters, cleaning chemicals, pesticides, batteries, and unlabeled tanks and containers. Equipment that may include these materials are ice machines, refrigerators, generators, computers, televisions, mercury switches, fluorescent lights, fluorescent light ballasts, sandblast units, paint sprayers, etc.
>
> SHM&SW Condition 1: If any lead-based paint, or other hazardous materials are found during remediation or repair activities, the subrecipient must comply with all federal, state, local abatement, and disposal requirements. Coordination with the FDEP Division of Air Resource Management or the local pollution control agency PRIOR to any demolition or renovations of buildings that contain asbestos or asbestos-containing materials is required. Failure to comply with these conditions may jeopardize FEMA funding; verification of compliance will be required at project closeout.
>
> SHM&SW Condition 2: The subrecipient shall ensure that all debris staging sites are authorized by FDEP. The subrecipient shall ensure that all debris is separated and disposed at permitted facilities or at a disposal site or landfill authorized by FDEP. The subrecipient is responsible for ensuring contracted staging and disposal of debris also follows these guidelines. Failure to comply with these conditions may jeopardize FEMA funding; verification of compliance will be required at project closeout.

6. Other Considerations Analysis

NEPA requires agencies to consider “reasonably foreseeable environmental effects of the proposed agency action” and “any reasonably foreseeable adverse environmental effects which cannot be avoided should the project be implemented” (42 U.S.C. 4332(c)). In accordance with NEPA, this EA

considered the combined effect of the preferred alternative and other actions occurring or proposed in the vicinity of the proposed project sites.

Alternative 1: No Action

With the No Action alternative, the responders will continue to operate out of a modular home and utilize the old volunteer station equipment two (2)-bay garage for fire truck storage. During major storms such as tropical storms (sustained winds of 39 – 74 mph) and hurricanes (>74 mph), there is a potential safety hazard for the response crew and vehicles due to the structures not meeting current codes mentioned above, so the crew must be relocated to a neighboring district. This relocation can cause a delay in response times for emergencies in Green Cove Springs and the surrounding communities within Clay County. The Fire Rescue Station #24 will continue to operate as it has in the past and thus may have a reasonably foreseeable environmental effect due to the possibility of damage and debris of the current station after a major storm.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The project is to replace the current fire rescue station with a larger, modern station rescue fire station. The minor/negligible effects listed in table 4.4b have been individually addressed to include practices to reduce or eliminate negative effects within reason. There are no other known past or planned projects in the area that are related either on a geographical or functional basis. The new station will be designed to withstand major storm events, thus reducing the likelihood of damage and debris scattered across the environment. Therefore, this action would not have an incremental impact when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions and thus will not have any reasonably foreseeable adverse environmental effects from the Proposed Action.

7. Permits and Project Conditions

The following is a list of some of the permits that will be obtained prior to the start of construction, as well as the project conditions that shall be followed:

- Clay County Demolition Permit
- Clay County New Construction Building Permit(s)
- SJRWMD Environmental Resource Permit (for modifications to the stormwater management system)
- State of Florida Permit(s) to Construct, Repair, Modify, or Abandon a Well (to abandon the existing well and install a new well).
- FDEP or SJRWMD Water Use Permit (consumptive use permit for pumping the new well)
- FWC Gopher Tortoise relocation permit.

- FDEP issued NPDES Generic Permit for Stormwater Discharge from Large and Small Construction Activities

EHP Standard Conditions

Under Alternative 2, Clay County would follow the following EHP standard conditions:

- Any change to the approved scope of work will require re-evaluation for compliance with NEPA and other Laws and Executive Orders.
- This review does not address all federal, state and local requirements. Acceptance of federal funding requires recipient to comply with all federal, state and local laws. Failure to obtain all appropriate federal, state and local environmental permits and clearances may jeopardize federal funding.
- If ground disturbing activities occur during construction, applicant will monitor ground disturbance and if any potential archeological resources are discovered, will immediately cease construction in that area and notify the State and FEMA.

EHP Special Conditions

Under Alternative 2, Clay County would follow the following EHP special conditions:

- ESA Condition 1: The project will minimize the extent of habitat clearing to only what is necessary for the construction. Areas of undisturbed habitat near the site will be preserved to maintain potential shelter and foraging opportunities for the Eastern indigo snake.

- ESA Condition 2: During project construction, anyone (construction crews, contractors, applicants, etc.) involved on-site is prohibited to kill any snakes encountered. Additionally, it is required to report any large black snakes (with a photo if possible) that appear within the Project construction area.

- ESA Condition 3: If all tree removal for this project is carried out between December 15 and February 15, no further consultation will be necessary for the tri-colored bat. If this timing is not achievable and no other measures to avoid adverse effect are possible, then we recommend that you proceed to acoustic survey to determine presence or probable absence of tri-colored bats.

- NHPA Condition 1: If human remains or intact archaeological features or deposits (e.g. protectable points, pottery, glass, metal, etc.) are uncovered, work in the vicinity of the discovery will stop immediately and all reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm to the finds will be taken. The subrecipient will ensure that archaeological discoveries are secured in place, that access to the sensitive area is restricted, and that all reasonable measures are taken to avoid further disturbance of the discoveries. The subrecipient s contractor will provide immediate notice of such discoveries to the applicant. The subrecipient shall contact the Florida Division of Historic Resources and FEMA within 24 hours of the discovery. Work in the vicinity of the discovery may not resume until FEMA has completed consultation with SHPO,

Tribes, and other consulting parties as necessary. In the event that unmarked human remains are encountered during permitted activities, all work shall stop immediately and the proper authorities notified in accordance with *Florida Statutes,* Section 872.05.

- NHPA Condition 2: The subrecipient shall adhere to the attached *Demolition Best Management Practices for Florida* to minimize potential impacts to historic resources caused by ground disturbing activities. Failure to comply with this condition may jeopardize FEMA funding; verification of compliance by FEMA-EHP will be required at project closeout.

- RCRA Condition 1: Unusable equipment, debris and material shall be disposed of in an approved manner and location. In the event significant items (or evidence thereof) are discovered during implementation of the project, applicant shall handle, manage, and dispose of petroleum products, hazardous materials and toxic waste in accordance to the requirements and to the satisfaction of the governing local, state and federal agencies.

- RCRA Condition 2: Subgrantee shall handle, manage, and dispose of potentially hazardous waste, universal waste, and hazardous materials in accordance with the requirements of local, state, and federal regulations. These materials may include, but are not limited to asbestos, lead-based paint, laboratory reagents, propane cylinders, paints and solvents, coolants containing chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), used oil, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), other petroleum products, used oil filters, fuel filters, cleaning chemicals, pesticides, batteries, and unlabeled tanks and containers. Equipment that may include these materials are ice machines, refrigerators, generators, computers, televisions, mercury switches, fluorescent lights, fluorescent light ballasts, sandblast units, paint sprayers, etc.

- SHM&SW Condition 1: If any lead-based paint, or other hazardous materials are found during remediation or repair activities, the subrecipient must comply with all federal, state, local abatement, and disposal requirements. Coordination with the FDEP Division of Air Resource Management or the local pollution control agency PRIOR to any demolition or renovations of buildings that contain asbestos or asbestos-containing materials is required. Failure to comply with these conditions may jeopardize FEMA funding; verification of compliance will be required at project closeout.

- SHM&SW Condition 2: The subrecipient shall ensure that all debris staging sites are authorized by FDEP. The subrecipient shall ensure that all debris is separated and disposed at permitted facilities or at a disposal site or landfill authorized by FDEP. The subrecipient is responsible for ensuring contracted staging and disposal of debris also follows these guidelines. Failure to comply with these conditions may jeopardize FEMA funding; verification of compliance will be required at project closeout.

8. Agency Coordination and Public Involvement

FEMA issued a disaster-wide initial public notice for Hurricane Matthew on October 08, 2016, to notify the public of projects under the Public Assistance program that may be occurring within floodplains. The public was notified that the drafted FEMA EA was available for review and comment by posting the public notice at Clay County Grants Office, 420 College Drive, Ste 107, Middleburg, FL 32068 (available between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays) and on Clay County's website at https://www.claycountygov.com/government/grants. An electronic version of the EA is posted on FDEM's website at: https://www.floridadisaster.org/public-notices/. Copies of the EA and appendices are available for review upon request to: FEMA-R4EHP@fema.dhs.gov. An electronic version of the finalized EA will be posted on FEMA's website at: https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/environmental-historic/nepa-repository.

FEMA initiated informal consultation with USFWS on September 18, 2024. In accordance with Section 7 of the ESA, the project was evaluated for the potential impacts to federally listed threatened and endangered plant and animal species and their designated critical habitats. FEMA determined that the project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect (MANLAA) the Everglade snail kite and eastern indigo snake will have no effect on the eastern black rail, whooping crane, and tri-colored bat. USFWS evaluated the project's potential impacts through informal consultation under Section 7 of the ESA and concurred with FEMA's determination, which is contingent upon Clay County's implementation of three (3) special conditions during project-related activities.

FEMA initiated consultation under Section 106 of the NHPA with the FL SHPO and the following six (6) federally recognized tribes with current and ancestral interest in Clay County, Florida on June 10, 2025: the Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, and Seminole Tribe of Florida. FEMA received concurrence with the both the Phase I archaeological survey results and recommendations and determination of No Historic Properties Affected from the FL SHPO on July 09, 2025. No objections to the proposed project were expressed by the Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, or Seminole Tribe of Florida.

Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town	Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida	Muscogee (Creek) Nation	Poarch Band of Creek Indians
Seminole Nation of Oklahoma	Seminole Tribe of Florida	The Division of Historical Resources at Florida Department of State/Florida State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Florida Ecological Services Field Office

9. List of Preparers

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Appendices available upon request to FEMA Region 4 EHP (FEMA-R4EHP@fema.dhs.gov)