



FEMA

Public Notice

**Regarding the Section 106 Review Under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and Adverse Effects for Private Property Debris Removal and Commercial Property Debris Removal; Private Property Acquisition & Demolition; and Elevation Projects throughout Western North Carolina damaged by Helene (DR-4827-NC) under the following FEMA funded Grant Programs:
Public Assistance (PA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA)**

Seeking Public Comment

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is providing funding to the State of North Carolina Department of Public Safety Emergency Management (NCEM) to aid individual property owners for the acquisition and demolition, elevation, or mitigation reconstruction of flood damaged properties and properties vulnerable to future flood events using Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), or Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA). In addition, FEMA is providing Public Assistance (PA) funding for the demolition of private property as part of Private Property Debris Removal (PPDR) and Commercial Property Debris Removal (CPDR) projects applicable to the most heavily damaged, high impact counties as determined by FEMA in coordination with the State. As a part of compliance responsibilities under regulations 36 CFR Part 800, for Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires federal agencies, including the FEMA, to identify and consider the potential effects of its actions on historic properties through a collaborative framework for seeking and considering the views of the public on how potential adverse effects on historic properties resulting from a proposed Federal action should be addressed.

Responsible Entity: FEMA Public Assistance (PA), FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA), or Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)

Applicant: North Carolina Department of Public Safety Emergency Management (NCEM)

Project Title: DR-4827-NC Helene Property Debris Removal, Commercial Property Debris Removal, Acquisition and Demolition, Elevation, and Mitigation Reconstruction Projects

Proposed Work: Tropical Storm Helene caused widespread impacts leading to catastrophic damage including properties which have been completely swept away by flooding and/or landslide events; properties which are severely damaged; and properties which were inundated with flood waters, in some instances over 20 feet in depth, leaving the property susceptible to mold and rot. Participation in PPDR, CPDR, acquisition and demolition, elevation, and mitigation reconstruction projects is completely voluntary and sought out by the property owner. Individual property owners can withdraw from the program with coordination between the community and NCEM.

Elevation:

Proposed elevation projects will involve raising buildings to the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) plus two (2) feet of freeboard, or higher as required by the local Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, on a range of possible foundations which include but are not limited to the following options (which will be delineated by a licensed, professional engineer during the feasibility study): piers, piles, columns or fill where feasible; foundation curtain wall with footings; or reinforced concrete masonry unit (CMU) block walls. Depth of ground disturbance is anticipated to be no more than three (3) feet below ground level or base of crawlspace as applicable except for pile foundations where new, full-length piles are installed, in which case the pile tip shall extend to a depth of no less than eight (8) feet below natural grade or finished grade of the lot, whichever is lower. Due to the bedrock underlayment found in the western part of the state, if piles are deemed the best solution, it is anticipated that the piles will terminate at the bedrock. New pier and pile locations will align with the existing supports for the buildings. If new placement varies due to site conditions or engineers' specifications, new locations will be identified and placed to minimize ground disturbance. All utilities will be properly elevated. Environmental protection measures, such as sediment barriers and other soil loss protection, will be taken. Each site will be dressed and graded to provide for positive drainage and ease of future maintenance. Per the residential building code, the grade shall fall a minimum of 6" within the first 10 feet to drain surface water away from the foundation walls. Any surface disturbance due to construction equipment will be remediated with grading and seeding prior to the closeout of the project. The final grading of the properties is anticipated to remain the same as the pre-mitigated grades.

Acquisition and Demolition:

Undertakings involving structure demolition include the complete removal of existing foundations or, when complete removal is not possible, existing foundations will be taken down to a depth of approximately six (6) inches below soil surface and adequately drilled to allow for drainage. Ground disturbance will be limited to the immediate area of the demolished property, and the staging areas will be located within the footprint of the existing property boundaries. Debris will be removed, and the properties will initially be stabilized with clean soils and graded and seeded to prevent erosion. To further ensure all work will be limited to previously disturbed grounds FEMA and the North Carolina Emergency Management will be conditioning each undertaking with demolition to include the Best Management Practices (BMPs) found at the end of this document. The deeds to the properties will be transferred to the subrecipient (typically a city or county) with restrictions imposed for the site to remain as open space in perpetuity as defined in the 44 CFR § 206.434 (d).

Mitigation Reconstruction:

Mitigation Reconstruction undertakings include the reconstruction of homes that were fully destroyed or the demolition and reconstruction of homes which were damaged by storm events associated with Tropical Storm Helene. The projects consist of elevating code-compliant and hazard-resistant reconstructed structures above the Base Flood Elevation (BFE), plus two (2) feet of freeboard or higher as required by the local Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance. Site preparation activities may include demolition of existing structures, removal and disposal of project debris, site environmental restoration, utility relocation, and site grading as required per site conditions. The construction shall endeavor to minimize vegetation disturbance and removal to prevent unnecessary runoff. When vegetation disturbance is unavoidable, silt fencing shall be installed during construction to reduce runoff impact on surrounding areas. The rebuild will consist of installation of code-compliant, single-family homes on elevated foundation systems at the same location of the previous home. The square footage of each resulting structure will be no more than 10 percent greater than that of the original structure as identified on the tax cards for each property. Depth of ground disturbance will be no more

than two (2) feet below surface. If elevated on pilings, the pile tip shall extend to a depth of not less than eight (8) feet below natural grade or finished grade of the lot, whichever is lower. Due to the bedrock underlayment found in the western part of the state, it is anticipated that the piles will terminate at the bedrock. All utilities will be properly elevated. Environmental protection measures, such as sediment barriers and other soil loss protection, will be taken. Each site will be dressed and graded to provide for positive drainage and ease of future maintenance. Once the mitigation process is complete, sitework, including final grading, seeding, and general landscaping, shall be done to return the site to pre-mitigation conditions.

Private Property Debris Removal and Commercial Property Debris Removal:

Emergency demolition of structures located on private property within high impacted counties (see above) may be eligible when partial or complete collapse is imminent, and that collapse poses an immediate threat to the general public as determined by the jurisdictional authority in coordination with a qualified individual (i.e. engineer). Undertakings involving structure demolition on private property include the complete removal of slabs and existing foundations. Ground disturbance will be limited to the immediate area of the demolished property, and the staging areas will be located within the footprint of the existing property boundaries. To further ensure all work will be limited to previously disturbed grounds FEMA and the North Carolina Emergency Management will be conditioning each undertaking with demolition to include the Best Management Practices (BMPs) found at the end of this document. .

Due to the extensive damage and number of properties over forty-five (45) years of age, the above project constitutes an assumed Adverse Effect to Historic Properties under 36 CFR § 800.5(a)(1). FEMA in consultation with the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), interested Tribes, and other consulting parties have developed an approach to holistically resolve any adverse effects of the Undertaking per Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Proposed mitigation of the adverse effects includes:

- **Digital Photo Recordation** of eligible or listed properties over 45 years of age, to include digital photo documentation packages submitted to SHPO.
- **A Historic Property Inventory** forms (new or updated) for all eligible and listed properties over 45 years of age will be submitted to SHPO.
- **Public Interpretation:** FEMA working with SHPO, NCEM and local communities will develop a Story Mapper to include histories of the individual communities impacted, details of Helene and impacts to the region, reflections on similarities to the Floods of 1916 Story Mapper; and stories of the region's recovery and resiliency. In addition, FEMA will work with SHPO, NCEM and local communities to develop public gardens where interest lies including but not limited to healing gardens, memory gardens, living gardens, and children's play gardens within local communities. There is potential for signage to link the community gardens to the above Story Mapper and following Community Stories.
- **Oral Histories** – FEMA will work with SHPO, NCEM, volunteers, partner agencies, and the local community to document Community Stories of the area, stories of response and recovery efforts associated with Helene and stories of strength and resiliency.

Public Comments: Any Member of the public is encouraged to provide views on how the project may affect historic properties and the ways these effects may be avoided, minimized, or mitigated. To help develop a course of action for this project, FEMA is requesting your input within 30 days of the date of this notice.

Interested persons may submit comments, questions regarding this specific project should be sent in writing using the subject line '*DR-4827-NC Helene PPDR, CPDR, HMGP, or FMA, Project*'

Mail to: FEMA-DR-4827-NC EHP
3005 Chamblee Tucker Road
Atlanta GA, 30341

Email to: fema-ncfieldehp@fema.dhs.gov

POSTED ON: April 22, 2025

End of Notice