

EARLY NOTICE AND PUBLIC REVIEW OF A PROPOSED ACTIVITY IN A WETLAND

July 3, 2015

To: All Interested Agencies, Groups & Individuals

This Notice is related to Federal assistance provided in response to the Presidentially-declared disaster, Superstorm Sandy. This is to give notice that the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has determined the following proposed action under the Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, Elevation, and Mitigation (RREM) program, developed by the state to rehabilitate or reconstruct properties damaged by Superstorm Sandy, is located in a jurisdictional wetland. DCA will be identifying and evaluating practicable alternatives to relocating the action in the wetland and analyzing the potential impacts to the wetland from the proposed action, as required by Executive Order 11990, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 Subpart C, Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands.

Project Description

Application ID number: RRE0037182

The proposed project is located at 1 Anchorage Drive, Middle Township, NJ 08247 (Cape May County). The proposed project will involve reconstruction and elevation of a single-family residential structure at the physical address listed above. A review of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Mapped Wetland layer shows NJDEP Mapped wetlands are present, immediately adjacent to the project area on the eastern side of the parcel. In addition to the desktop review, a qualified Wetland Biologist has conducted a site visit to verify the presence of and characteristics of any wetlands onsite and has determined that the three parameters necessary to positively identify jurisdictional wetlands (hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soils, and hydrology) are present within the project site. Specifically, the wetland biologist concluded the wetlands present onsite are tidal wetlands dominated by cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) with common reed (*Phragmites australis*) bordering on the narrow upland slope of the parcel adjacent to Stone Harbor Boulevard. The wetland biologist noted that this upland area is approximately 15' by 35' (525 sq. ft.) and slopes steeply from the road grade above to the beginning of the boardwalk. It is mostly composed of fill (sand, concrete, etc.) and is dominated by common reed, yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), pokeweed (*Phytolacca Americana*), and an eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*). The toe of the slope from the adjacent road appears to mark the upland/wetland boundary. Results of a sample pit in the upland area revealed the soil was a sandy loam (Munsell 7.5YR 4/3) with bits of rocks and concrete. Sample pits were also dug in the wetland area to a depth of approximately 20 inches, at which water started to infiltrate. These soils were highly organic and very dark (Munsell 10YR 2/1) at the O horizon, transitioning into grayish (gleyed) muck at the bottom of the holes. Also noted was an abundance of fiddler crab holes and scuttling crabs at the project site. The wetland biologist concluded the entire footprint of the house appears to be on jurisdictional wetlands, with perhaps a very small percent within the upland area, north portion of the parcel closest to the roadway.

There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, people who may be affected by activities in jurisdictional wetlands and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment should be given an opportunity to express their concerns and provide information about these areas. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public education/outreach tool. Public commenters are encouraged to offer alternative methods to serve the same project purpose, and methods to minimize and mitigate impacts. The dissemination of information and request for public comment about wetlands can facilitate and enhance federal efforts to reduce the risks associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the federal government

determines it will participate in actions taking place in jurisdictional wetlands, it must inform those who may be put at a greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received by DCA on or before July 20, 2015, or fifteen (15) days from the actual date of publication, whichever is later. DCA encourages electronic submittal of comments at <http://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/sandyrecovery/review/>. In the alternative, comments may be submitted on paper to: Stacy Bonnaffons, Assistant Commissioner, Sandy Recovery Division, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, 101 South Broad Street, PO Box 800, Trenton, NJ 08625-0800.

Acting Commissioner Charles A. Richman
New Jersey Department of Community Affairs