



FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Tallahassee, FL Lab Construction
6383 Mahan Drive; Tallahassee, FL

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

In accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and implementing procedures, an environmental assessment (EA) was prepared to analyze the potential impacts of constructing the research laboratory facility at 6383 Mahan Drive; Tallahassee, FL. This Environmental Assessment has concluded that the project will have No Significant Impact on the environment, and an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. The proposed project is preferred over the alternatives considered, which include no action and site relocation.

Purpose and Need:

The proposed new construction would be a relatively economical steel frame building on a slab foundation of equal total square footage located within the footprint of the demolished structures consisting of biology laboratory rooms, a chemistry laboratory, a rearing laboratory, offices, break room, and restroom areas, and would accommodate research programs much more effectively than the current inefficient and aged temporary structures.

Proposed Action and Alternatives

This Environmental Assessment has found that the project is a typical demolition and replacement construction project on an already developed site which would not significantly change the existing use or capacity, and therefore will have no impact on local community facilities, services, or socioeconomic conditions. This project involves the demolition of four portable laboratory buildings and the new construction of a permanent structure of equal total square footage as a replacement at the same location. The existing structures were placed on the site approximately 20 years ago and consist of four portable buildings and paved parking immediately east of the Florida A&M Center for Viticulture and Small Fruits Research facility on Mahan Drive in Tallahassee, Florida. The proposed site is already in use and the proposed project would not change the existing use or capacity. The proposed structure would use the existing utilities and services in quantities comparable to existing usage.

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Research Service (ARS) considered alternatives in this EA:

- **Alternative #1: (No Action Alternative).** No demolition or construction of new facilities. The site would remain in its current condition and the existing center would continue to lack modern, efficient facilities to effectively accommodate research programs. Benefits to this alternative are limited to cost savings.
- **Alternative #2: Site Relocation.** The project is relocated to a site that is not prime farmland, within a coastal zone or elevated noise area, or within range of any endangered species, threatened species, or migratory birds. Due to the widespread species ranges and coastal zones, this alternative would place the project well outside the general vicinity and would be distance prohibitive. The proposed project location was selected due to the presence of the existing research center and proximity to the adjacent Florida A&M Center and research plots. The project location must be located nearby to retain these advantages. A preferred location may not be possible without additional land acquisition, which may be cost restrictive as well.

Note: The Proposed Action is preferred over the above listed alternatives, due to their respective disadvantages.

Public Engagement

ARS will publish a Notice of Availability (NOA) for the final EA and FONSI. The NOA will be published in the Tallahassee Democrat once this FONSI has been executed. The final EA and FONSI will be available upon request.

Potential Impacts

The EA considered the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action including cumulative impacts. The analysis completed in the EA found that no significant impacts on environmental resources would result from the implementation of the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action will be implemented in compliance with the following best management practices and mitigation measures for the corresponding resource area(s):

Impacts Summary	
Resource Area	Best Management Practices (BMPs) and Mitigation Measures
Sediment, Stormwater, and Surface water	<p>Impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The project has the potential to affect local surface waters during demolition and construction by way of sediment-laden storm water runoff.</i> <p>Mitigation Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Storm water Pollution Prevention and Erosion Control Plans are required during demolition and construction to protect nearby surface waters and adjacent properties.</i>

Finding of No Significant Impact

After careful review of the EA, I have concluded that implementation of the Proposed Action will not generate significant controversy or have a significant impact on the quality of the human or natural environment. Therefore, as evidenced by my signature below, I determine that the Proposed Action will have no significant impact and the action will be implemented. This analysis fulfills the requirements of NEPA and the CEQ regulations. An Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared, and the USDA ARS is issuing this FONSI.

Signed Approval:

Archie Tucker
Area Director
Agricultural Research Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

05/09/2024

Date

Signed Disapproval:

Archie Tucker
Area Director
Agricultural Research Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Date