Draft Environmental Assessment

# Bandera County Maintenance Facility

**Prepared for:**
**FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY**
**REGION VI**

Turner Collie & Braden Inc.

*Environmental Planning*

*September 2003*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS



**APPENDICES**

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| CAA | Clean Air Act |
| CERCLA | Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act |
| CO | carbon monoxide |
| CWA | Clean Water Act |
| dB | decibels |
| EA | Environmental Assessment |
| EO | Executive Order |
| EPA | Environmental Protection Agency |
| ESA | Endangered Species Act |
| FEMA | Federal Emergency Management Agency |
| FHBM | Flood Hazard Boundary Map |
| FHWA | Federal Highway Administration |
| FIRM | Flood Insurance Rate Map |
| gpm | gallons per minute |
| mg/l | milligrams per liter |
| msl | mean sea level |
| NAAQS | National Ambient Air Quality Standards |
| NEPA | National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 |
| NFIP | National Flood Insurance Program |
| NGVD | National Geodetic Vertical Datum |
| NHPA | National Historic Preservation Act |
| $NO_2$ | nitrogen dioxide |
| NRCS | Natural Resources Conservation Service |
| NRHP | National Register of Historic Places |
| NWI | National Wetland Inventory |
| $O_3$ | ozone |
| OSHA | Occupational Safety and Health Administration |
| Pb | lead |
| $PM_{10}$ | particulate matter less than or equal to 10 microns |
| RCRA | Resource Conservation and Recovery Act |
| $SO_2$ | sulfur dioxide |
| TCEQ | Texas Commission on Environmental Quality |
| TxDOT | Texas Department of Transportation |
| THC | Texas Historical Commission |
| USACE | U.S. Army Corp of Engineers |
| USGS | U.S. Geologic Survey |
| USFWS | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Project Authority

On July 4, 2002, President Bush declared a major disaster as a result of flooding in nine counties in central Texas (FEMA-1425-DR-TX). The declaration was later expanded to include a total of 39 counties. Bandera County was one of the 39 counties. As a result of damage sustained during the flooding, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is considering funding the construction of a new maintenance facility for the Bandera County Engineer.

In accordance with the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, PL 93-288, as amended, and implementing regulations at 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 206, FEMA is required to review the environmental effects of the proposed action prior to making a funding decision. In accordance with 44 CFR, Part 10, FEMA has prepared this environmental assessment to meet the requirements of Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). The purpose of this environmental assessment is to analyze the alternatives and assess the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed construction of a new maintenance facility in Bandera County, Texas.

## 1.2 Project Location

The location of the proposed maintenance facility is on State Highway (SH) 173 approximately two miles north of the City of Bandera (*Figure 1* and *Figure 2*). The City of Bandera is located in Bandera County, approximately 35 miles northwest of San Antonio, Texas. The project site lies on the northeast side of SH 173 on a 20-acre tract of undeveloped land owned by Bandera County.

# 2.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

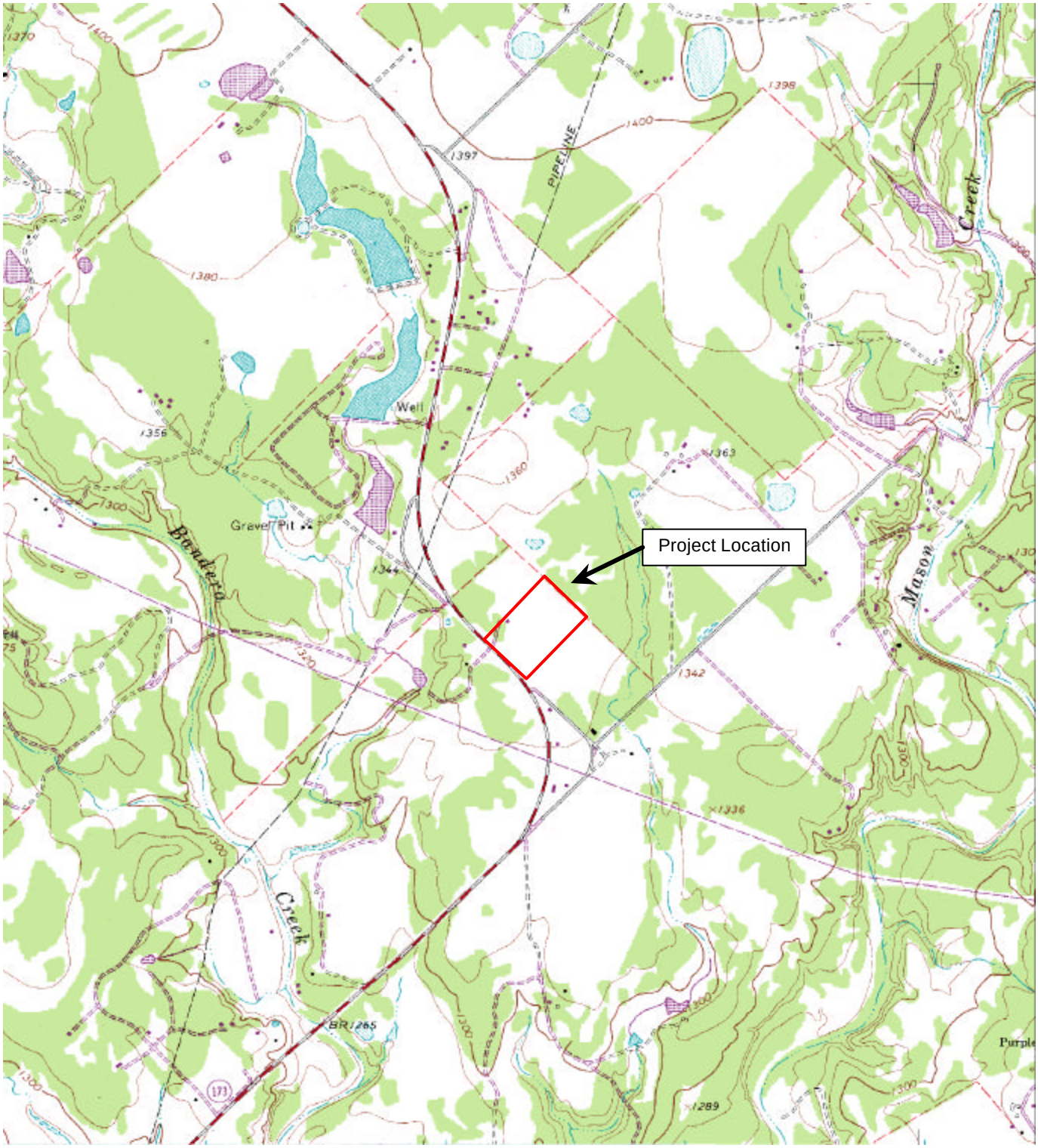
The July 2002 floods interrupted the maintenance operations performed by the Bandera County Engineer's office and displaced operations and administrative staff. The purpose of the proposed action is to allow the Bandera County Engineer to continue to provide effective maintenance services to the county by providing a facility to replace the one lost in the flooding. During the flood event, water rose to approximately three feet inside the former maintenance facility and remained there for several days. The building was deemed unsafe and subsequently demolished. The former maintenance facility was located within the 100-year floodplain.

Prior to the July 2002 floods, Bandera County had one facility with which to maintain its vehicle fleet, serve as a materials storage area, and to provide offices for the Bandera County Engineer and maintenance staff. A new facility is needed to replace and provide these same services. The new facility should be in the vicinity of Bandera on an available property, outside the 100-year floodplain.

# 3.0 ALTERNATIVES

## 3.1 No Action

The No Action alternative would entail no construction of a new maintenance facility for the Bandera County Engineer. Consequently, the Bandera County Engineer would be without an adequate facility for which to maintain its vehicles and to support its roadway maintenance operations.




LEGEND

Project Limits (Approximate)

**FIGURE 1**
**Location Map**
**Bandera County Maintenance Facility**
**Bandera County, Texas**
**Bandera Pass Quad**

**SCALE**

**1" = 2,000'**

N

TurnerCollie&Braden Inc.

PROJECT NO.

Date: May 2003


LEGEND

Project Limits (Approximate)

FIGURE 2
Site Location - Aerial
Bandera County Maintenance Facility
Bandera County, Texas

SCALE

1" = 500' (approx.)

N

TurnerCollie & Braden Inc.

PROJECT NO.

Date: May 2003

## 3.2 Proposed Action

Bandera County has prepared and submitted an application for FEMA funding under FEMA's Public Assistance Program being administered in response to FEMA-1425-DR-TX. The proposed action is the construction of a new building and attendant features to serve as the Bandera County Engineer's maintenance facility. The proposed new facility will consist of a maintenance barn and offices totaling about 5,200 square feet. In addition to the main building, other development will include a parking area, materials storage areas, and a water well. The total area needed for the proposed facility is expected to be between five and ten acres. A conceptual layout of the proposed maintenance barn and offices is shown on *Figure 3*.

Other sites for the facility were reviewed by Bandera County but only one site met the requirements of locality (in the vicinity of Bandera), availability (willing seller), and affordability (reasonable cost to the County). The proposed action would occur on a 20-acre site located approximately two miles north of Bandera. The work would consist of minor grading, construction of the building and pavement areas, and installation of utilities (water, septic, electric, etc.). The location of the facility within the 20-acre site has not yet been determined but it is expected that undeveloped portions of the site will be reserved for future expansion.

# 4.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND IMPACTS

## 4.1 Geology and Soils

The site of the proposed new maintenance facility is located on a 20-acre tract of land, approximately two miles north of the City of Bandera. The general area consists of rolling hills and is rural in nature. The proposed site is located outside the city limits of Bandera. The existing land use on the site is primarily agricultural. Approximately 18 acres of the tract is under agricultural use. The other two acres is lightly wooded and contains two mobile homes, belonging to the previous owner, and several out buildings. Land use on the adjacent tracts is also agricultural.

The proposed project is located in the south-central part of Texas in the physiographic region known as the Edwards Plateau. The dissected plateau has created the hilly topography found in the general area. The elevations in the county range from 1,200 to 2,400 feet (USDA 1971). The elevation at the site of the proposed maintenance facility is approximately 1,350 feet. Average annual precipitation is about 29 inches. The larger amounts of rainfall in Bandera County tend to occur in the months of April, May, June and September (USDA 1971).

The limestones and other carbonate rocks of the Trinity, Fredericksburg and Washita groups dominate the geology in the project area. These stratigraphic units are of varying hardness and are generally flat-lying, creating the stair-stepped topography seen in the area. A thin veneer of soil obscures any outcrops of the underlying geology on the site. There are no quarries or other mining operations in the vicinity of the project site.

The *Soil Survey of Bandera County* indicates that the project site occurs within the Tarrant-Brackett soil association. In general, these soils consist of very cobbly clayey to loamy, shallow soils on uplands. These soils tend to form over limestone. The units within this association include the Tarrant, Brackett, Frio, Denton, Krum, Nuvalde and Doss soils. Specifically, the mapped soil on the site is identified as Denton Silty Clay, 1 to 3 percent slopes.

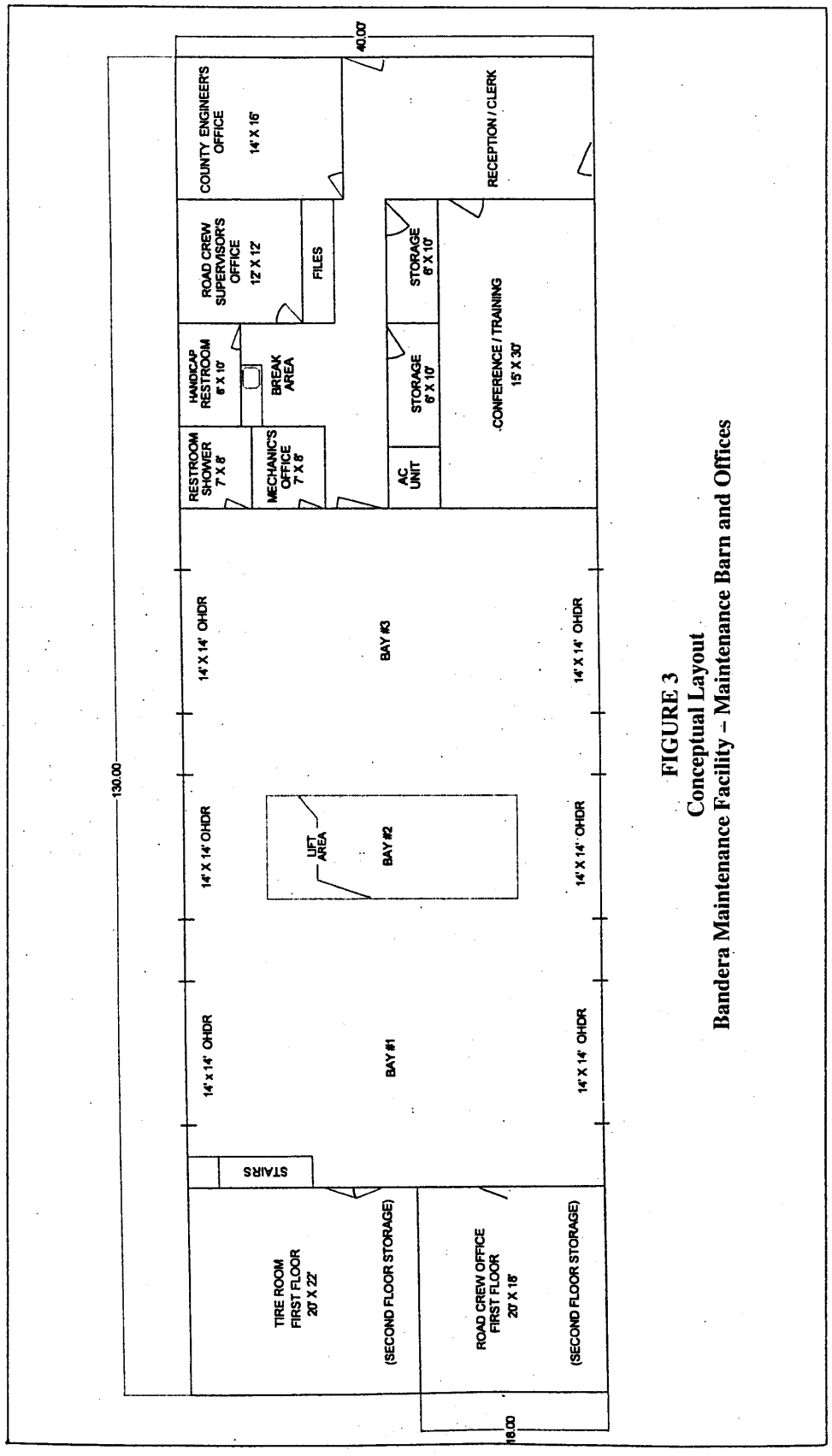



**FIGURE 3**
**Conceptual Layout**
**Bandera Maintenance Facility – Maintenance Barn and Offices**

The Farmland Protection Policy Act (P.L. 97-98, Sec. 1539-1549; 7 U.S. Code 4201, et seq.) was enacted to minimize the unnecessary conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses as a result of federal actions. The Natural Resources Conservation Service is responsible for protecting significant agricultural lands from irreversible conversions that result in the loss of an essential food or environmental resource. Prime farmland is characterized as land with the best physical and chemical characteristics for the production of food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. This land is either used for food or fiber crops or is available for those crops, but is not urban, built-up land, or water areas. Unique farmland is land other than prime farmland that is used for production of specific high-value food and fiber crops. It has the special combination of soil quality, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high quality or high yields of specific crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods.

Alternative A – No Action: The No Action alternative would have no impacts on the soils or geology of the area.

Alternative B – Construct New Facility: Construction of a new maintenance facility at the site would cause some disturbance of geology and soils as part of the site preparation work. Since the site is relatively flat, the grading needed at the site would be minor. Exposed soils could be subject to erosion, therefore, silt fence and/or other storm water runoff best management practices would be utilized during construction (see *Section 4.2*). In general, effects to geology and soils would be minor and temporary in nature.

The Denton Silty Clay 1 to 3 percent slopes is listed as a Prime Farmland only when it is irrigated (Natural Resources Conservation Service 2003). The site is not irrigated. According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the proposed project does not contain Important Farmland and is exempt from the Farmland Protection Policy Act (letter attached, see *Appendix B*).

## 4.2 Water Resources

### 4.2.1 Surface Water

There are no rivers, creeks or other defined drainages on the project site. Storm water leaves the site as sheet flow and drains to Bandera Creek. Bandera Creek flows into the Medina River, located approximately four stream miles from the project site. This section of the Medina River is listed as Stream Segment 1905 in the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's (TCEQ) *State of Texas Water Quality Inventory*. The designated water uses of this segment are contact recreation, exceptional aquatic life and public water supply. Based on the TCEQ's 1999 Clean Water Act Section 303 (d) list, Stream Segment 1905 is not listed as a threatened or impaired waterway segment. There are no wild and scenic rivers, as designated under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, in the project area.

Alternative A – No Action: The No Action alternative would not change the site drainage nor have an effect on the surface water quality of the area.

Alternative B – Construct New Facility: Potential impacts to surface waters associated with the construction of the new maintenance facility include the potential for erosion and sedimentation during construction. Some vegetation clearing and minor grading would be needed as part of the site preparation work. During this period, storm water runoff could carry sediment offsite into receiving

waters. A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan would be prepared and erosion and sedimentation control measures would be implemented to minimize any detrimental effects to water quality during construction.

Because the project would disturb more than five acres, it would require authorization under the Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (TPDES) Construction General Permit. In order for a project to be authorized under the TPDES General Permit, a Notice of Intent is required to be filed with the TCEQ and a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan would have to be prepared. The Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan would include temporary erosion control measures to minimize impacts to water quality during construction. These control measures may include the use of silt fencing, rock berms, hay bales or other suitable means of containment. Temporary erosion control measures (where appropriate) would be maintained during construction. Vegetation would be cleared only as needed. Upon completion of the project, disturbed areas would be re-vegetated with native plants.

Any adverse effects to water quality associated with the construction of the new maintenance facility would be short term and be minimized by the mitigation measures described above. Once constructed, storm water best management practices will be applied to the operation of the facility. These practices would include proper storage and handling of materials, cleanup of spills, and proper disposal of hazardous or regulated substances. Runoff from the site is not expected to have an adverse impact on Bandera Creek. No long-term effects to water quality are expected as a result of the proposed project.

### 4.2.2 Waters of the U.S. including Wetlands

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S., including wetlands, pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Wetlands are identified as those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. In addition, Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, directs federal agencies to take actions to minimize the destruction, loss, or degradation of wetlands and to preserve and enhance the values of wetlands on federal property.

<u>Alternative A – No Action</u>: The No Action alternative would have no effect on wetlands or other waters of the U.S. and would not require a Section 404 permit.

<u>Alternative B – Construct New Facility</u>: Prior to visiting the project site, a review of the U.S. Geological Survey quadrangle map for the area and an aerial photo of the site was performed to identify the potential for wetlands and/or other waters of the U.S. This review did not indicate any potential areas containing waters of the U.S. on or adjacent to the site. A site visit conducted on April 25, 2003 confirmed there are no waters of the U.S. subject to Section 404 permitting on the project site. The proposed project would not impact waters of the U.S. and would not require a Section 404 permit.

### 4.2.3 Floodplains

Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management) requires federal agencies to avoid or minimize development in the floodplain except when there are no practicable alternatives. According to the

National Flood Insurance Program's Flood Insurance Rate Map (Community-Panel Number 480020 0135B), the project site is not located within the 100-year floodplain. The nearest designated floodplain occurs along Bandera Creek.

Alternative A – No Action: The No Action alternative would not result in impacts to the 100-year floodplain.

Alternative B – Construct New Facility: Since the project site is not located within a designated floodplain, construction of the new maintenance facility would have no impact on the floodplain and does not require a review under Executive Order 11988.

#### 4.2.4 Groundwater

The primary source of groundwater in the area is the Trinity Aquifer. The Trinity Aquifer extends in a band from north central Texas to south central Texas. The geologic deposits making up the aquifer include limestones, sandstones and shales. The varying geologic units of the Trinity Group result in varying water quality and yields depending on location and depth. There is one water well currently located on the property. According to the official TCEQ Edwards Aquifer recharge zone maps, the project site does not occur within the recharge zone or contributing zone of the Edwards Aquifer (TCEQ 2003(a)).

Alternative A – No Action: The No Action alternative would have no effect on groundwater.

Alternative B – Construct New Facility: The construction of the new maintenance facility would not have any substantial effect on the Trinity Aquifer in the area, however; a new water well into the aquifer would be included as part of the project. Neither the depth nor yield of the well is known at this time. The existing water well on the site, if not utilized, would be plugged and abandoned according to the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulations requirements.

### 4.3 Biological Resources

#### 4.3.1 Flora and Fauna

The project site occurs within the Edwards Plateau ecoregion and Live Oak-Ashe Juniper Parks subregion as described by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in *The Vegetation Types of Texas*. Commonly associated species of this region include live oak (*Quercus virginiana*), Ashe juniper (*Juniperus ashei*), shin oak (*Quercus sinuata*), cedar elm (*Ulmus crassifolia*), evergreen sumac (*Rhus virens*), escarpment cherry (*Prunus serotina*), saw greenbriar (*Smilax bona-nox*), twistleaf yucca (*Yucca rupicola*), Texas prickly-pear (*Opuntia lindheimeri*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), Texas grama (*Bouteloua rigidiseta*) and netleaf hackberry (*Celtis reticulata*).

The vegetation on the project site is typical of that found in fallow fields and includes various grasses, forbs and wildflowers. The approximately two acres of the site that is not in agricultural use is sparsely wooded. Tree species on this portion of the site include netleaf hackberry, live oak, mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*), Ashe juniper and domesticated pecan (*Carya sp*.). No rare plants or habitats are listed as occurring on or adjacent to the project site. Vegetation on the project site can be seen on the photos contained in *Appendix A*.

Typical fauna in this portion of the Edwards Plateau includes white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), Rio Grande turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*), striped skunk *(Mephitis mephitis)*, squirrels *(Spermophilus spp.)*, nine-banded armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), various species of bats, and a wide variety of songbirds. Because of the disturbed nature of the site, habitat for these species is poor.

The Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act was enacted to protect fish and wildlife when federal actions result in control or modification of a natural stream or body of water. No streams or other water bodies are located on the project site, therefore, the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act is not applicable to the proposed action.

Alternative A – No Action: The No Action alternative would have no effect on flora or fauna in the project area.

Alternative B – Construct New Facility: The construction of a new maintenance facility would result in clearing of vegetation and disturbance of any wildlife species in the immediate area. Clearing of vegetation would occur on five to ten acres of the 20 acre site. An attempt would be made to avoid any large trees and incorporate existing vegetation into the site plan. In general, the effects to plants and animals are expected to be minimal.

### 4.3.2 Threatened and Endangered Species

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 provides for the protection of all listed threatened and endangered species from take defined as "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect or attempt to engage in any such conduct." Harm is further defined by USFWS to include significant habitat modification or degradation that results in death or injury to listed species by significantly impairing behavioral patterns such as breeding, feeding, or sheltering. Harass is defined by USFWS as actions that create the likelihood of injury to listed species to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavior patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding or sheltering.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) lists four species in Bandera County as being endangered. These species are the Black-capped Vireo (*Vireo atricapillus)*, Golden-cheeked Warbler (*Dendroica chrysoparia)*, Tobusch fishhook cactus (A*ncistrocactus tobuschii)*, and Texas snowbells (S*tyrax texana)*.

*Black-capped Vireo*

The black-capped vireo is a small, insect-gleaning songbird that breeds primarily in central Texas and to a lesser extent in central Coahuila, Mexico and central Oklahoma. Its breeding habitat consists of shrub or savannah vegetation with dense growths in the shrub layer from the ground to approximately six feet in height (Campbell 1995). Black-capped vireo habitat can be characterized as mid-successional shrub-dominated vegetation, predominantly composed of shin oak, Ashe juniper, Texas oak (*Q. buckleyi*), live oak, and other woody vegetation growing in an open or partially closed canopy.

*Golden-cheeked Warbler*

The golden-cheeked warbler inhabits woodlands containing Ashe juniper in combination with various deciduous species, including Texas oak, live oak, cedar elm, Texas persimmon (*Diospryos texana*), hackberry (*Celtis* spp.), evergreen sumac, Texas ash (*Fraxinus texana*), redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), escarpment black cherry, deciduous holly (*Ilex decidua*) and others. These associations occur along drainages and canyons throughout the Balcones Fault Zone. Ashe juniper is often the dominant woody plant and occurs at all sites occupied by the golden-cheeked warbler. The golden-cheeked warbler is a breeding resident of central Texas from late February through August.

*Tobusch Fishhook Cactus*

The Tobusch fishhook cactus occurs in the western Edwards Plateau, including portions of Bandera County. The cactus is round, usually two to three inches tall and up to three and half inches in diameter. Typical habitat for the Tobusch fishhook cactus includes very gravelly soil over limestone, and short-grass areas within live-oak juniper shrublands.

*Texas Snowbells*

Texas snowbells is an irregularly-branched, deciduous shrub or small tree, growing up to 15 feet in height. This species blooms in April and has small, white, bell-shaped flowers. Typical habitat for Texas snowbells includes limestone bluffs and cliff faces along rivers and streams in the Edwards Plateau.

Alternative A – No Action: The No Action alternative would have no effect on threatened or endangered species.

Alternative B – Construct New Facility: The site visit conducted on April 25, 2003 did not indicate the presence of habitat suitable for the endangered or threatened species listed for Bandera County. The vegetation on the project site is typical of that found in fallow fields and includes various grasses, forbs and wildflowers. The approximately two acres of the site that is not in agricultural use is sparsely wooded. Tree species on this portion of the site include netleaf hackberry, live oak, mesquite, Ashe juniper and pecan. Vegetation on the adjacent properties is as follows:

- The property to the northwest of the subject tract contains a residence and is heavily grazed by goats. The tree species on the adjacent property include netleaf hackberry, live oak and mesquite. Very little understory and herbaceous growth exists on this property.

- The property to the northeast of the subject tract is undeveloped and appears to be pastureland. The portion of this property closest to the subject tract is lightly wooded and savannah-like. The canopy cover is estimated at 30%-40%. The tree species on the property included medium to large live oaks, mesquite and cedar elm (*Ulmus crassifolia*). The understory consists of a variety of medium sized grasses. Because this vegetation community appears relatively mature and does not contain a significant broad-leafed shrub layer, it does not appear to be suitable habitat for the black-capped vireo. In addition, the limited canopy cover and lack of Ashe juniper do not appear to provide suitable habitat for the golden-cheeked warbler.

- The property to the southeast of the subject tract is a hayfield.

- The property to the southwest of the subject tract is highway right-of-way.

The USFWS was contacted by letter regarding the potential for endangered species to be impacted by the proposed project. According to the USFWS, the project site does not contain habitat for any of the listed species described above; therefore; the construction of the new maintenance facility would not affect any threatened or endangered species or their habitat (letter attached in *Appendix B*).

## 4.4 Air Quality

The Clean Air Act requires that states adopt ambient air quality standards. The standards have been established in order to protect the public from potentially harmful amounts of pollutants. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for six air pollutants. These pollutants include sulfur dioxide ($SO_2$), particulate matter with a diameter less than or equal to 10 micrometers ($PM_{10}$), carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide ($NO_2$), ozone ($O_3$), and lead. The EPA has designated specific areas as NAAQS attainment or non-attainment areas. Non-attainment areas are any areas that do not meet (or that contribute to ambient air quality in a nearby area that does not meet) the quality standard for a pollutant. Attainment areas are any areas that meet ambient air quality standards. According to the TCEQ, Bandera County is currently designated as "in-attainment" for these standards (TCEQ 2003(b)).

Alternative A – No Action: The No Action alternative would have no effect on air quality.

Alternative B – Construct New Facility: Pollutant emissions from construction equipment may result in minor, temporary effects to air quality in the area immediately surrounding the construction activity. Vehicular exhaust emissions would be produced by the operation of diesel engines and other construction equipment. These effects would be localized and of short duration.

## 4.5 Transportation

The project site is located along SH 173 approximately two miles north of Bandera. SH 173 is the main road between Bandera and the City of Kerrville, which lies approximately 20 miles to the north. SH 173 is a rural two-lane roadway that carries light traffic. According to the Texas Department of Transportation, average daily traffic on this portion of SH 173 is 3,900 vehicles (TxDOT 2003).

Alternative A – No Action: The No Action alternative would have no effect on transportation in the area.

Alternative B – Construct New Facility: Construction of the new maintenance facility at the proposed location may have a slight effect on transportation by increasing the number of vehicles on SH 173. The increase would be expected to be minor and would be due to staff traveling to and from the maintenance office, and county maintenance vehicles leaving and arriving at the site.

## 4.6 Noise

Noise is generally defined as unwanted sound. The closest noise receptor is a residence approximately 500 feet from the project site. Noise levels within and adjacent to the project area

would increase during the proposed construction activities as a result of construction equipment and vehicular traffic. The noise levels generated would be limited to workday daylight hours for the duration of the construction work. There are no local noise ordinances that would apply to the proposed project.

Alternative A – No Action: The No Action alternative would not result in impacts to noise receptors in the area.

Alternative B – Construct New Facility: Construction of the new maintenance facility would result in a slight increase in noise during the construction of the facility. The increase in noise is expected to be minor and would not affect any sensitive receptors.

## 4.7 Cultural Resources

A search of the Texas Historic Sites Atlas found no listings of National Register properties on or adjacent to the project site. The project site has two mobile homes and several small outbuildings on it. No historical markers were noted in the area during the site visit. Coordination with the Texas Historical Commission was initiated to provide information regarding potential archeological properties and National Register eligibility.

Alternative A – No Action: The No Action alternative would have no effect on cultural resources in the area.

Alternative B – Construct New Facility: The Texas Historical Commission was contacted by letter regarding the potential for archeological or historic resources to be impacted by the proposed project. According to the Texas Historical Commission, construction of the new maintenance facility at the proposed location would not affect any known archeological or historic resources in the area (letter attached in *Appendix B*). Should any historic or archaeological materials be discovered during construction, all activities on the site would be halted immediately and the contractor and/or Bandera County would contact FEMA and the Texas Historical Commission for further guidance.

## 4.8 Socioeconomic

According to the 2000 census, Bandera County has a population of 17,645. The City of Bandera is the county seat of Bandera County and has a population of 1,172. The primary industries in the county are tourism, hunting, fishing, and ranching (Texas Almanac 1999). Per capita income in the county is $19,635 (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 84.1% of the population in Bandera County is white; 13.5% is Hispanic or Latino; and 2.4% is "other."

Alternative A – No Action: The No Action alternative could have a negative effect on socioeconomic conditions in the area. Some inefficiency would occur as county maintenance operations are hindered by an inadequate maintenance facility, or lack thereof. Degraded roadway condition resulting from a lack of maintenance could hinder growth and development.

Alternative B – Construct New Facility: Construction of the new maintenance facility would facilitate and support economic growth in the county by providing adequate maintenance operations and upkeep of county roads. The proposed site of the facility will also accommodate future expansion if the county should decide that additional facilities are needed. This will save the county

money in the long term. In addition, the construction of the new facility would be expected to create new jobs in the short term.

## 4.9 Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898, entitled "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations," mandates that federal agencies identify and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of programs on minority and low-income populations.

Alternative A – No Action: The No Action alternative would not have disproportionate impacts on minority or low-income populations.

Alternative B – Construct New Facility: The proposed action is not expected to have adverse or disproportionate impacts on minority or low-income populations. The benefits of a new maintenance facility are expected to be proportional to all residents in Bandera County.

## 4.10 Safety

Safety and security issues that were considered in this environmental assessment include the health and safety of area residents, the public at-large, and the protection of personnel involved in activities related to the implementation of the proposed project.

Alternative A – No Action: The No Action alternative could have a negative effect on the general safety of the residents of Bandera County. The lack of an adequate maintenance facility would hinder maintenance operations on county roads. Degraded roadway conditions could result in unsafe driving conditions for the general public.

Alternative B – Construct New Facility: Construction of the new maintenance facility would allow Bandera County to continue, and expand if necessary, their maintenance operations. These operations include roadway maintenance, materials storage and emergency response. These operations are critical to the health and safety of residents throughout Bandera County.

## 4.11 Hazardous Materials

Hazardous wastes, as defined by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), are defined as "a solid waste, or combination of solid wastes, which because of its quantity, concentration, or physical, chemical, or infectious characteristics may (1) cause, or significantly contribute to, an increase in mortality or an increase in serious irreversible or incapacitating reversible illness or (2) pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly treated, stored, transported or disposed of or otherwise managed."

Hazardous materials and wastes are regulated in Texas by a combination of federal laws and state laws. Federal regulations governing the assessment and disposal of hazardous wastes include RCRA, the RCRA Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments, Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), Solid Waste Act (SWA), and Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA).

Visual observation of the project area did not reveal obvious existing or potential hazardous materials, substances, or conditions. No drums or other sources of potential hazardous materials were observed in the project area. No indications of pipelines crossing the project area were noted in the field or on the USGS topographic map reviewed for this project. No evidence of overhead transmission lines or overhead electrical transformers potentially containing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) was noted in the field.

Additionally, a review of regulatory environmental databases was conducted via the internet from federal and state agencies. The following is a list of the federal and state databases reviewed for this project: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Priorities List (NPL), EPA Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Information System (CERCLIS) List, EPA Resource Conservation and Recovery Information System (RCRIS) List, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Superfund Registry, TCEQ Leaking Petroleum Storage Tank (LPST) List, and TCEQ Petroleum Storage Tank (PST) List. The databases were searched by zip code and by the municipality of Bandera, Texas. No facilities or properties in the project area were listed on the databases reviewed.

Alternative A – No Action: The No Action alternative would not disturb any hazardous materials or create any potential hazard to human health.

Alternative B – Construct New Facility: Construction of the new maintenance facility would not disturb any hazardous materials or create any potential hazard to human health. If hazardous constituents are unexpectedly encountered in the project area during the proposed construction operations, appropriate measures for the proper assessment, remediation and management of the contamination would be initiated in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations. The contractor would take appropriate measures to prevent, minimize, and control the spill of hazardous materials in the construction staging area.

## 5.0 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts are those effects on the environment that result from the incremental effect of the action when added to past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency (federal or nonfederal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative effects can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time. There are no other known projects that, when added to the proposed project, have a cumulative impact on the human environment.

## 6.0 PUBLIC INVOLVMENT

The public will be invited to comment on the proposed action. A legal notice will be posted in the local newspaper, *The Bandera Review*, and this Draft Environmental Assessment will be made available for review at the local library for a 30-day period.

## 7.0 AGENCY COORDINATION AND PERMITS

As part of the development of this Environmental Assessment, state and federal resource protection agencies were contacted.

Because the project will disturb more than one acre, a TCEQ TPDES storm water permit will be required. It is anticipated that no other permits or approvals will be needed from any of the other regulatory agencies; however, the following agencies have been contacted and asked to comment on the proposed project:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD)
- Texas Historical Commission
- Natural Resources Conservation Service

## 8.0 CONCLUSION

The findings of this Environmental Assessment conclude that the proposed construction of a new maintenance facility for the Bandera County Engineer would result in no significant environmental impacts to the human or natural environment; therefore, the proposed action meets the requirements of a Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI) under NEPA and the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will not be required.

## 9.0 REFERENCES


Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Flood Hazard Boundary Map. Bandera County. National Flood Insurance Program. Panel Number 4800200135B.

Natural Resources Conservation Service. Personal communication with Mr. Lee Knox of the Kerrville Service Center. May 27, 2003

Texas Almanac. 1999. Printed by the *Dallas Morning News*

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality(a). 2003. http://gis.tnrcc.state.tx.us/website/iredwards Site visited May 22, 2003.

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality(b). 2003. http://www.tnrcc.state.tx.us/oprd/sips Site visited August 4, 2003.

Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission (TNRCC). 1999. *The State of Texas Water Quality Inventory, 1996*. Surface Water Quality Monitoring Program.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. 1999. Annotated County Lists of Rare Species – Travis and Williamson Counties, July 20, 1999.

Texas Water Development Board (TWDB). 1979. *Geohydrology of Comal, San Marcos, and Hueco Springs*. Report No. 234, 85 p.

Texas Department of Transportation. Personal communication with Ms. Serena Burrough, May 8, 2003.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2000. State and County QuickFacts. Bandera County. http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48/48187.html. Site visited on May 16, 2003.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service. 1971. *Soil Survey of Bandera County, Texas*.

U.S. Geological Survey Topographic Map, 7.5-minute series, *Bandera Pass, Texas*. 1964, photorevised 1973.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1999. County by County List of Federally Listed Threatened and Endangered Species of Texas, June 30, 1999.

## 10.0 LIST OF PREPARERS

*Project Manager and Principal Investigator:*

**Carlos Swonke**
Sr. Project Manager
Turner Collie & Braden Inc.
Austin, Texas

# Appendices

# Appendix A
# Site Photos

*[photos not available in PDF format]*

# Appendix B
# Agency Correspondence

*[letters not available in PDF format]*

# Appendix C
# Public Notice

**Federal Emergency Management Agency**
**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment
for the Bandera County Maintenance Facility Project
Bandera, Texas
FEMA-DR-1425-TX.

Bandera County has prepared and submitted an application to FEMA for funding the construction of a new building and attendant features to serve as the new Bandera County Engineer's maintenance facility. The proposed new facility will consist of a maintenance barn and offices totaling about 5,200 square feet. In addition to the main building, other development will include a parking area, materials storage areas, and water well. The proposed action would occur on a 20-acre site along SH 173, approximately two miles north of Bandera.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the CEQ regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), the National Historic Preservation Act, and the implementing regulations of FEMA (44 CFR Part 9 and 10), an Environmental Assessment (EA) is being prepared to assess the potential impacts of the proposed action on the human and natural environment.

The EA evaluates alternatives that provide for compliance with applicable environmental laws. The alternatives to be evaluated include (1) No Action; (2) The Proposed Action - the construction of a new maintenance facility.

The draft Environmental Assessment is available for review from October 1, 2003 to October 30, 2003, at the Bandera County Library located at 515 Main Street, Bandera, during normal business hours. The draft Environmental Assessment is also available for review online at the FEMA website http://www.fema.gov/ehp/docs.

Written comments regarding this proposed project can be mailed to Carlos Swonke, Turner Collie & Braden Inc., 400 West 15 Street, Suite 500, Austin, TX 78701. Comments should be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on October 30, 2003

*this page intentionally left blank*