**FINAL PUBLIC NOTICE**

**PUBLIC NOTICE OF A PROJECT PENDING FUNDING BY THE**

**FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)**

Notification is hereby given of the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA’s) pending intent to provide Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding for Bastrop County to reduce hazardous fuel loads in areas generally described as Pine Valley Cove, Pine Canyon Drive, Pine Valley Spur, Pine Valley Loop, Lakeview Drive, and Foster Road. Funds will be provided in accordance with the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, Public Law 93-288, as amended. Pursuant to Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management) and FEMA’s implementing regulations at Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 9, Bastrop County hereby provides interested parties with a notice of its final decision and an explanation of the alternatives that were considered.

Bastrop County, Texas proposes to implement a hazardous fuel reduction project within Pine Valley Estates. The 1,200-acre project site consists of 210 lots with modest homes. It is estimated that 250-300 acres will be treated. The proposed action is intended to minimize the spread of and damage from fires and to assist firefighters in combating wildfires. The goal of the vegetation modification is twofold: (1) in areas of heavy fuel concentrations that are more than 30 feet from a structure, the area will be treated mechanically to reduce fuel concentration; and (2) in larger areas of continuous fuels adjacent to structures, fuel breaks will be established.

The project area is depicted on the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), Map Number 48021C0500E effective date January 19, 2006. The proposed action lies within Zone A, an area that has a 1-percent probability of flooding every year, respectively. A map of the project area and its location within the floodplain is available for public inspection. Parties interested in receiving a copy of the map should contact the Bastrop County Engineer using contact information provided in this notice.

In accordance with FEMA Instruction 108 1 1, an Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared pursuant to Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as implemented by the regulations promulgated by the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ; 40 CFR Parts 1500 1508). The EA resulted in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) dated January 13, 2022.

Two alternatives to the proposed actions were considered for O’Grady Road: Alternative 1, if no action is taken to reduce wildfire hazards in this area, resident and homes in South Central Bastrop County would remain at an elevated risk for the spread of a catastrophic wildfire. The probability of loss of human life and property in a wildfire would continue to be unacceptably high. A major wildfire could have severe temporary impacts on environmental resources (i.e. air quality, water quality, and emergency services). Fighting a major wildfire would also require large quantities of water at a time when water resources in the area may be strained by drought. Alternative 2, there is no other alternative option to this type of work. Prescribed burning would not be an option based on the heavy fuel loads and proximity to homes and business. The only options would be mechanical understory thinning or no action.

FEMA and Bastrop County have determined that the proposed project is the only practicable alternative available; therefore, a portion of the proposed action must be in the floodplain. The proposed action would have no significant adverse impact on the floodplain and will benefit the area by reducing the risk of wildfire. Therefore, measures to minimize impacts on the floodplain are not necessary. Bastrop County has declared that the proposed action conforms to local floodplain standards, and is responsible for the management, construction, and maintenance of the proposed action.

Interested persons may submit written comments to: Bastrop CountyDevelopment Services 211 Jackson Street Bastrop, Texas 78602 Attention: Cari Croft, Lost Pines Habitat Conservation Program (LPHCP) Administrator, during the hours of 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Comments may also be submitted via email with subject line Pine Valley Estates Hazardous Fuels Project to [Cari.Croft@co.bastrop.tx.us](mailto:Cari.Croft@co.bastrop.tx.us). Interested persons may also obtain more detailed information about the action, or request a copy of the findings from Cari Croft, LPHCP Administrator at [Cari.Croft@co.bastrop.tx.us](mailto:Cari.Croft@co.bastrop.tx.us). All requests should be received no later than January 12, 2023.  No action will be taken before this date.