

**Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)**  
**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**Site-Specific Environmental Assessment for the**  
**Proposed Construction and Operation of the**  
**South Florida National Cemetery Expansion**

## **1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), National Cemetery Administration (NCA) completed a Site-Specific Environmental Assessment (SEA), incorporated by reference herein, to identify, analyze, and document the potential physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts associated with the Proposed Action to construct and operate a planned cemetery expansion phase within an approximately 70-acre area within the South Florida National Cemetery at 6501 N State Road 7, Lake Worth, Palm Beach County, Florida.

NCA is responsible for providing cemetery services for veterans and other eligible persons pursuant to the provisions of the *National Cemeteries Act of 1973*, 38 USC §§2400-2414, and other statutory authority and regulations. Under this mandate, NCA is responsible for the construction, operation and maintenance of new and existing National Cemeteries.

In 2001, NCA identified the need to construct a new National Cemetery to serve veterans and their eligible family members in the south Florida region. Three potential sites were identified, and the anticipated impacts from developing each site as a typical National Cemetery were assessed and documented in the 2001 Final Environmental Assessment (EA). Based on the Final EA, VA issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). NCA ultimately selected the 313-acre former agricultural property in Lake Worth, Florida as the site for the new South Florida National Cemetery.

Following purchase of the property in 2002, VA began developing a master plan for the phased build-out of the cemetery. The master plan identified suitable areas for development, and anticipated unavoidable adverse impacts to some federal wetlands and other sensitive resources within the property. To mitigate these adverse impacts, VA defined on-site preservation areas (where development was prohibited) and purchased off-site wetland mitigation credits in advance of actual development. These preservation commitments and mitigation actions were documented in the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Environmental Resource Permit (ERP), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Individual Permit (IP), and VA's *Overall Cemetery Master Site Plan* dated November 2005 (2005 Master Plan).

In 2007, NCA began constructing Phase 1 of the South Florida National Cemetery according to the 2005 Master Plan. The Phase 1 cemetery covered approximately 100 acres within the central portion of the 313-acre property, and provided traditional gravesites, in-ground interment of cremated remains, and the physical infrastructure needed to support the Phase 1 cemetery and the majority of planned future expansion phases.

In 2014, VA completed an EA to assess and document the potential environmental effects associated with acquiring a 20-acre, former agricultural nursery parcel, located adjacent to the southwest corner of the South Florida National Cemetery, for development as a potential future cemetery expansion phase. Based on the 2014 Final EA, VA issued a FONSI in March 2014 and subsequently purchased the property later that year. Several dilapidated buildings associated with the former nursery remain at the 20-acre parcel where, to date, no development has occurred, nor has the 2005 Master Plan been updated to include the 20-acre parcel. However, VA retains the option to develop the 20-acre parcel, as needed, to accommodate future long-term burial expansion needs at the South Florida National Cemetery.

In 2016, VA evaluated the remaining burial capacity of the Phase 1 cemetery at the South Florida National Cemetery and concluded that, due to gravesite depletion, new burial sections would be needed to meet anticipated burial demand at the South Florida National Cemetery. An expansion would allow NCA to extend the longevity of the South Florida National Cemetery and continue providing burial benefits to future generations of eligible veterans and their families in south Florida who, otherwise, would not have long-term, reasonable access to burial benefits at a National Cemetery in this region. As a result, VA began planning for a Phase 2 cemetery expansion. The 2005 Master Plan and the terms of approved USACE and SFWMD permits served as the basis of design for the Phase 2 cemetery expansion within the permitted areas of the original 313-acre parcel.

The *purpose* of the Proposed Action is to enable NCA to continue providing interment benefits to eligible veterans and their families by further extending the longevity of the South Florida National Cemetery.

The Proposed Action is *needed* to allow NCA to continue meeting its goal of providing eligible veterans and their families with reasonable access to VA burial options and address the depletion of available grave sites.

VA prepared the SEA for this Proposed Action in accordance with the *National Environmental Policy Act of 1969* (NEPA; 42 United States Code [U.S.C.] 4321 et seq.), the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500–1508), 38 CFR Part 26 (*Environmental Effects of the Department of Veterans Affairs Actions*), and VA's 2010 *NEPA Interim Guidance for Projects*.

## 2 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

### 2.1 Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, the Phase 2 expansion would be located within an approximately 76-acre area in the central northern portion of the South Florida National Cemetery. No new property would be acquired. The expansion would avoid preservation areas and be designed according to the 2005 Master Plan and existing federal and state permits. The expansion would provide approximately 9,750 pre-placed crypt sites, 4,170 cremain sites, and 6,000 columbarium niches; a roadway connecting new and existing burial areas; grading to manage stormwater; landscaping; extension of irrigation utilities to support the new burial areas; and a flag assembly area. At the 20-acre parcel, the former nursery outbuildings would be demolished and a new fence installed around the parcel's perimeter. The Proposed Action meets the purpose and need for action by extending the longevity of the South Florida National Cemetery, and accommodating future long-term burial needs of future generations of Veterans and their families in the south Florida region.

The specific elements of the Phase 2 expansion are summarized in the following outline and described in greater detail in the SEA:

- *Columbarium* – Columbarium sites would be graded and have multiple sections of four to five niches high (approximately seven to eight feet in total height) with a border of landscaped grounds and existing forested land that was previously cattle-grazing pasture. The new columbarium would have capacity for approximately 6,000 interments.
- *In-Ground Burial Section* – Burial sections for in-ground cremains, in-ground traditional gravesites and pre-placed crypts would be graded and separated from other interment areas using landscaped vegetation. The new in-ground burial section would have capacity for approximately 13,920 interments.
- *Flag Assembly Area* – A flag assembly area would be constructed in the central western portion of the expansion area. The area would be graded and finished with hardscaping and native, non-invasive vegetation.

- *Roadways* – A new asphalt roadway, approximately 1.5 miles long, would be constructed to connect the flagpole assembly area and new burial sections to the existing Phase 1 cemetery roadway. The new roadway base would be graded and compacted prior to paving. The roadway would be approximately 18-24 feet wide. No modifications to existing roadways would be required. No new parking areas would be created or required because visitors would continue to be allowed to park on the roadway shoulder adjacent to burial sections.
- *Landscaping* – The expansion area would be landscaped to provide privacy and in a manner that is consistent with the existing cemetery. Planted vegetation would primarily be turf grass, including Celebration bermudagrass®, St. Augustine grass (*Stenotaphrum secundatum*), and Bahiagrass (*Paspalum notatum*).

The following paragraphs summarize major design elements incorporated into the Proposed Action. These elements are specifically design to minimize and/or avoid adverse impacts to the natural environment.

- *Avoidance of Environmentally Sensitive Areas* – The Phase 2 expansion area would entirely avoid preservation areas specified in the 2005 Master Plan; in the existing SFWMD ERP (number 50-06978-P issued July 2005); and the USACE IP (number SAJ-2004-637 [IP-AAZ] issued September 2005). A reauthorization of the USACE IP would be obtained prior to construction of the Phase 2 expansion.

Within the approximately 70-acre expansion area, only 62.6 acres would be developed, while the remaining 7.4 acres would be preserved, including a 4.1-acre cypress preserve and a 3.3-acre wetland restoration preserve.

- *Avoidance and Protection of Listed Species* – Prior to construction, VA would conduct surveys for the state-listed gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*). If it is present, a permit from Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC) would be obtained to relocate individual animals to an approved off-site recipient location.
- *Stormwater Management* – The Proposed Action would create approximately 230,000-square feet of new impervious surfaces. This includes approximately 160,000-square feet associated with the new roadway, with the remainder for the columbarium and flag assembly area. The additional volume of stormwater run-off would be managed on-site using a new stormwater retention pond that would be interconnected to the existing Phase 1 cemetery pond network.

As part of the design process, VA would also comply to the maximum extent technically feasible with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) Technical Guidance on Implementing the Stormwater Run-off Requirements for Federal Projects under Section 438 of the Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA), as well as the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit requirements, inclusive of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and a Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control (SESC) Plan.

- *Utility Requirements Irrigation Water Supply* – Operation of the Phase 2 expansion would require consumption of water to irrigate approximately 25 acres of newly landscaped grounds. The new and existing on-site stormwater retention ponds would continue to supply irrigation water. No municipal potable water would be used for irrigation.

## 2.2 No Action Alternative

In addition to the Proposed Action, VA evaluated a No Action Alternative in the SEA. Under the No Action Alternative, the Proposed Action would not be implemented. A gravesite expansion would not occur and

improvements to the 20-acre parcel would not be implemented. Under the No Action alternative, the longevity of the South Florida National Cemetery would not be extended, leaving future generations of eligible veterans and their families increasingly without long-term, reasonable access to burial benefits at a National Cemetery in south Florida. The Sarasota National Cemetery, the nearest National Cemetery, is located approximately 170 miles to the west/northwest of the South Florida National Cemetery. The No Action alternative would place an undue burden on veterans, their families, and visitors by requiring extended travel to reach a National Cemetery outside of the south Florida region. If veterans and their families must resort to private burials, they are deprived of the honor and privilege bestowed upon and owed to them by a grateful nation for their service to their country. The distribution of National Cemeteries with available capacity in the region would continue to be unequal, and VA would not be in compliance with the requirements of the *Servicemembers Civil Relief Act*, (50 U.S.C. §§3901—4043).

While the No Action Alternative would not satisfy the purpose of, and need for, action, this alternative was retained because it reflects the status quo and serves as a benchmark against which the effects of the Proposed Action were evaluated, as required under the applicable CEQ Regulations (40 CFR 1502.14).

### 3 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

In assessing potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action, VA determined there would be no significant adverse direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts from construction or operation of the Proposed Action on any of the environmental resources analyzed in the SEA.

Potential less-than-significant adverse impacts would be further reduced or avoided by implementing environmental Best Management Practices (BMP) during construction and operation of the Proposed Action, as detailed in the SEA. The following paragraphs summarize the potential adverse and beneficial impacts for each of the environmental resource topics analyzed in the SEA.

***Aesthetics.*** Short-term, direct, minor, less-than-significant adverse impacts could occur from land clearing, grading, and associated construction activities. The presence of heavy construction equipment and unfinished stages of construction would temporarily impact the visual quality of the central northern portion of the property. Land clearing and grading would expose soils, which could increase fugitive dust generation and impact the appearance of the Phase 1 cemetery. To minimize these potential impacts, the contractor would install fabric-covered privacy fencing, utilize water trucks to minimize fugitive dust emissions, and install gravel-covered pads to remove loose soil from equipment exiting the construction site. Long-term, direct, moderate beneficial impacts will be manifested during operation due to having extended the landscaped, park-like appearance to the new Phase 2 expansion area.

***Air Quality.*** Short-term, direct, less-than-significant adverse impacts could occur from operating construction equipment powered by diesel-fueled combustion engines during the approximately 18-month schedule for land clearing, grading, construction of interment areas, connecting roadways, and associated infrastructure improvements. Non-road construction vehicles would generate criteria pollutant emissions and land clearing and grading activities would generate fugitive dust and fine particulate emissions. To minimize these potential impacts, construction equipment would be maintained in good working order, idling would be limited to less than five minutes, and BMPs to suppress dust and stabilize exposed soils would be implemented to further minimize particulate emissions. All anticipated emissions would be below the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) General Conformity Rule *de minimus* thresholds. Operational sources of air emissions would be generated from visitors' vehicles traveling through the Phase 2 cemetery expansion and maintenance vehicles for mowing and burials. These activities would result in a negligible increase in overall emissions.

***Cultural Resources.*** Based on the prior cultural resources investigations, no archeological sites or historical properties are known to exist at the South Florida National Cemetery or 20-acre parcel. In the unlikely event

that human remains or cultural resources are encountered during construction or operation phases, an “Inadvertent Discovery” plan would be immediately implemented and all subsurface disturbance activities would immediately cease until the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Compliance Review Section, as well as the Seminole Tribe of Florida, the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma and The Muskogee (Creek) Nation, are contacted and provide authorization for work to resume. This would ensure that there would be no adverse impacts on any cultural resources.

**Topography and Soils.** Long-term, direct, less-than-significant adverse impact on topography could occur due to grading for the stormwater retention pond and elevating burial areas and roadways. Impacts would be avoided within the USACE and SFWMD permit-defined preservation areas. Impacts would be minimized elsewhere by grading the topography of the Phase 2 cemetery in concert with the existing Phase 1 cemetery.

Short-term, direct, less-than-significant adverse impacts on soil quality could occur during construction and operation due to removal of vegetative cover, loss of top soil, and soil compaction. Exposed soils could be susceptible to erosion by wind and surface water runoff, leading to potential sedimentation of run-off. These impacts would be minimized through BMPs and adherence to the terms of the FDEP NPDES Construction General Permit, inclusive of the SWPPP and SESC Plan.

**Hydrology and Water Quality.** Short-term, direct, less-than-significant adverse impacts could occur if sediment-laden run-off entered the on-site stormwater retention ponds or off-site drainage canals. These impacts would be minimized through BMPs for erosion control, as specified under the FDEP NPDES permit and associated SWPPP and SECS Plan. New impervious areas associated with the Phase 2 expansion (roadways, flagpole-area hardscape) would be graded to direct stormwater into the new on-site retention pond, which would be designed to accommodate at least 100% of the anticipated stormwater volume.

**Wetlands, Floodplains, Coastal Zone Management.** The long-term adverse impacts from filling in 25.6 acres of existing low-quality wetlands were previously authorized and mitigated for, as documented in the USACE IP and SFWMD ERP. Potential adverse impacts are further avoided by avoiding development within high-quality onsite wetlands and maintaining a buffer of approximately eight acres of undisturbed land around the on-site preservation areas. Potential long-term, less-than-significant adverse impacts could occur from development within a 100-year floodplain. This impact would be minimized by filling and grading burial areas and roadways above the 100-year flood elevation.

**Wildlife and Habitat.** Long-term, direct, less-than-significant adverse impacts could occur from permanently converting 50 acres of forested habitat to landscaped grounds. However, the majority of the proposed expansion area currently consists of low-quality wetlands dominated by non-native plant species with limited evidence of wildlife utilization. Additionally, to protect against any adverse impacts to the state-listed gopher tortoise, less than 90 days prior to construction VA will conduct surveys for the state-listed gopher tortoise, and, if present, coordinate with FFWCC for permits to relocate individual animals to an approved off-site recipient location. To avoid impacts to the federally-listed Eastern Indigo Snake, VA would adhere to the USFWS *Special Protection Measures for the Eastern Indigo Snake*.

**Noise.** Short-term, direct, less-than-significant adverse noise impacts could occur due to noise generated from heavy equipment used for land clearing, grading, road and infrastructure construction, and from construction workers driving within the cemetery to and from the construction site. Improvements at the 20-acre parcel would generate noise from machinery used to demolish the buildings and install the fencing. Noise impacts would be minimized by scheduling construction activities away from memorial services and providing construction workers with hearing protectors. Current operational noises from mowing and other routine maintenance activities would occur in the new Phase 2 expansion area. Impacts would be minimized by scheduling these activities at burial sections where memorial services are not actively occurring.

**Socioeconomics.** Short-term, direct, less-than-significant beneficial impact on socioeconomics could occur through the employment of local skilled and non-skilled workers and purchasing of materials from local or regional suppliers during the approximately 18-month construction period. Operations are anticipated to maintain current staffing levels and therefore have a negligible impact on socioeconomics conditions.

**Community Services.** Direct, long-term, significant beneficial impacts by providing additional burial capacity at the South Florida National Cemetery, benefiting Veterans and their families in the south Florida region. No impacts to other community services (*e.g.*, police, fire, medical, schools, housing).

**Transportation.** Short-term, direct, less-than-significant adverse impacts could occur during travel of construction vehicles within the Phase 1 cemetery and on nearby roads. The roadways within and adjacent to the South Florida National Cemetery are adequate to handle the temporary construction traffic and would not require physical alternation or traffic pattern modifications. To minimize impacts, construction vehicle traffic through the cemetery would be scheduled and routed to avoid disrupting the solemnity of committal services and processions. The Phase 2 expansion roadway design is consistent with NCA Master Construction Specifications and would allow visitors to continue parking on the roadway shoulder without damaging landscaped grounds.

**Solid and Hazardous Materials.** Short-term, direct, less-than-significant adverse impacts could occur from generating excess solid waste construction debris and managing hazardous materials (asbestos-containing materials [ACM] and lead-based paint [LBP]) during demolition of the outbuildings at the 20-acre parcel. To minimize impacts, excess demolition and construction debris would be recycled to the maximum extent allowable and practicable. Excess soils (if suitable) would be used as fill or stockpiled for future use at the maintenance yard or other designated locations within the cemetery property. Licensed workers would abate ACM and LBP prior to demolition of the outbuildings at the 20-acre parcel, and all ACM and LBP debris would be transported and disposed off-site in compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations. Operation would generate a negligible increase in typical solid wastes currently generated by cemetery operations, including memorial decorations and a minimal volume of excess soils.

**Utilities.** Long-term, direct, less-than-significant adverse impacts during operation could occur due to the need for irrigation water and electricity. To minimize impacts, irrigation water would be supplied by the new stormwater retention pond, which is designed to supply 100 percent of the volume needed to irrigate the newly landscaped areas within the Phase 2 cemetery. Electrical use would be limited to illuminating the new flagpole assembly area. The increased demand would be considered negligible and have no impact on service quality elsewhere at the South Florida National Cemetery or in the larger community.

Construction or operation of the Proposed Action would have no adverse or beneficial impact on geology, coastal zone management, land use, or environmental justice. Additionally, the Proposed Action would be viewed as a positive development within the community and therefore would not generate substantial public controversy.

#### 4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Impacts from implementing the Proposed Action, in combination with those from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future developments at and in the vicinity of the South Florida National Cemetery, are not expected to increase to a significant adverse level for any of the resources analyzed in this SEA.

According to the Palm Beach County Comprehensive Plan, the area including and surrounding the South Florida National Cemetery is to remain as a Rural Residential area (RR-10: 1 unit per 10 acres) for the foreseeable future. Areas beyond the general vicinity of the South Florida National Cemetery are proposed for future residential use (RR-5: 1 unit per 5 acres; LR-1: Low residential, 1 unit per acre), agriculture preservation, small industrial/commercial plazas, and for a planned high school near Lake Worth Road

(approximately three miles northeast of the cemetery). No other future major projects have been identified in vicinity of the South Florida National Cemetery as having the potential for cumulative effects.

Construction and operation of the Phase 2 cemetery would not result in a significant loss of agricultural land, change the rural/agricultural nature of the community to the west, or prevent proposed future development patterns in the commercial/residential areas east, south, and north of the South Florida National Cemetery.

The Phase 2 cemetery is located within the existing boundary of the South Florida National Cemetery in an area of the property that, while currently forested, was previously used for cattle grazing. The use of this portion of the property for continued cemetery activities is consistent with existing permits and the 2005 Master Plan.

To further ensure that the Proposed Action would have no significant adverse cumulative impacts to any of the environmental resources analyzed in the Final SEA, VA would implement the management, avoidance, and regulatory compliance measures identified in the SEA and summarized in Appendix A in this FONSI.

## 5 AGENCY AND PUBLIC COMMENT

As part of the NEPA process, VA notified relevant federal, state, and local agencies, and Native American Tribes, to allow them sufficient time to make known their environmental concerns that are specific to this Proposed Action. VA mailed letters to agencies and Tribes when the Draft SEA was released for a 30-day review and comment period. None of the comments received were in opposition to the Proposed Action. Comments and concerns submitted by these agencies and Tribes were incorporated into the analysis of potential environmental effects, as documented in the Final SEA.

VA also published a Notice of Availability (NOA) in the *Palm Beach Post* on March 28 and 31, 2019, to inform the public about the release of the Draft SEA and the opportunity to provide comments during the 30-day review period. The Draft SEA was available in print and digital formats at the South Florida National Cemetery; the Lantana Road Branch of the Palm Beach County Library at 4020 Lantana Road, Lake Worth, Florida 33462; and available for electronic download from VA's website at <http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/EA.asp>. No comments from the public were received during the 30-day review period.

## 6 FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

As a result of the analysis of impacts in the Final SEA, summarized and incorporated in its entirety by reference herein, it is the conclusion of VA that, with the implementation of appropriate minimization and avoidance measures included herein as Attachment A, the Proposed Action would not generate significant public controversy nor have a significant adverse impact on the quality of the natural or human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2)(c) of NEPA. Therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

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Stephan Frank  
Director, National Cemetery Association

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Fernando L. Fernández, REM  
Environmental Engineer  
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**Attachment A: Environmental Management Measures and Monitoring  
Incorporated into the Proposed Action**

<b>AESTHETICS</b>
<b>Construction</b>
Control fugitive dust emissions through routine construction BMPs, including using water trucks to prevent dust emissions, and install gravel-covered pads to remove dirt from the tires of vehicles leaving the Proposed Action construction site.
Erect temporary privacy fence around the construction zone, particularly around the proposed flagpole assembly area, which is visible from existing Phase 1 cemetery areas and visitors.
<b>Operation</b>
Perform routine and scheduled professional landscape maintenance to ensure the upkeep of the park-like appearance of the grounds and associated physical infrastructure (e.g., roads, interment areas).
<b>AIR QUALITY</b>
<b>Construction</b>
Reduce emissions associated with on-road construction vehicles by consolidating material deliveries and stage heavy equipment on-site to reduce mobilizations.
Minimize emissions associated with importing fill from an off-site borrow by utilizing suitable excess soil excavated from the new stormwater construction pond as the source of fill to raise elevations of burial areas and roadways within the Phase 2 expansion area.
Implement dust suppression methods to include application of water and construction scheduling (avoid earthwork during extremely windy and dry periods or when there is an emergency weather advisory). Additionally, haul tarps would be used to cover any soils transported to or from the construction site.
Stabilize exposed soil with native, non-invasive vegetation or mulching to minimize erosion and potential dust generation.
Limit construction vehicle speeds on paved roads within the South Florida National Cemetery and vicinity at or below posted limits to minimize dust generation. On unpaved surfaces at the site, maintain vehicle speeds at or below five miles per hour to minimize dust generation from exposed soil
Visually monitor all construction activities on a daily basis, particularly during extended periods of dry weather; implement additional dust control measures as needed.
Limit engine idling to less than five minutes and implement USEPA-recommended diesel controls including the use of clean diesel through add-on control technologies such as diesel particulate filters and diesel oxidation catalysts, repowers, or newer, cleaner equipment
<b>CULTURAL RESOURCES</b>
<b>Construction</b>
Comply with federal and state regulations and continue coordination with the SHPO and affected parties. In the unlikely event that human remains or cultural resources are encountered during construction, an “Inadvertent Discovery” plan would be immediately implemented.
If prehistoric or historic artifacts that could be associated with Native American, early European, or American settlement are encountered at any time within the project site area, the permitted project shall cease all activities involving subsurface disturbance in the vicinity of the discovery and the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Compliance Review Section, as well as the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, would be contacted immediately.
In the event that unmarked human remains are encountered during permitted activities, all work shall stop immediately, and the proper authorities notified in accordance with Section 872.05, Florida Statutes, including the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma.
<b>Operation</b>
In the unlikely event that human remains or cultural resources are encountered during operation, the aforementioned “Inadvertent Discovery” plan would be immediately implemented, including

<p>notifications. The plan would require that all ground-disturbing activities cease, and the Construction Supervisor would immediately contact the VA for guidance on the next steps to be taken.</p>
<p><b>GEOLOGY, SOILS, AND TOPOGRAPHY</b></p>
<p><b>Construction</b></p>
<p>Adhere to the terms of the FDEP National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Construction Activity/SWPPP (incorporating the SESC plan) and the SFWMD ERP (Chapter 62-330, FAC).</p>
<p>Install and maintain sedimentation and erosion control measures specified in the SWPPP and SESC, including the use of silt fencing, synthetic hay bales, specified loading and unloading areas, covering exposed soils during anticipated storm events, and revegetating soils with temporary and/or permanent native, non-invasive vegetation as soon as construction conditions allow.</p>
<p>Reuse suitable excess soils as a source of on-site fill to the maximum extent practicable.</p>
<p><b>Operation</b></p>
<p>Conduct routine landscaping to ensure soil remains vegetated and stabilized to prevent erosion.</p>
<p>Temporarily stockpile excavated soil for individual burial sites at the maintenance area (or other designed on-site storage area). Sod new burial sites to prevent erosion of soil.</p>
<p><b>HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY</b></p>
<p><b>Construction and Operation</b></p>
<p>Implement the BMPs listed above for Geology, Soils, and Topography to minimize sediment-laden runoff from reaching wetlands and surface water bodies.</p>
<p>Develop a site design that accounts for pre/post 100-year volume stormwater drainage and retention at a minimum.</p>
<p>Utilize native, non-invasive, drought-resistant vegetation for area landscaping to reduce irrigation volumes.</p>
<p>Design impervious areas to drain stormwater runoff to designated stormwater retention ponds.</p>
<p>Clear ephemeral drainages and intermittent and perennial streams of all work items, debris, or other obstructions placed by, or resulting from, construction operations.</p>
<p>Implement spill and leak prevention and response procedures, including maintaining a complete spill kit at the project area, to reduce the impact of incidental releases of petroleum-based fluids from construction and operational equipment to groundwater or surface water quality.</p>
<p>Locate machinery servicing and refueling areas away from streambeds and washes to reduce the possibility and minimize the impacts of accidental spills or discharges.</p>
<p>During operations, pesticide/herbicide applications (as part of routine maintenance activities) would be conducted to the minimum extent necessary and in accordance with manufacturer specifications, to avoid impacts to underlying groundwater resources.</p>
<p><b>WILDLIFE AND HABITAT</b></p>
<p><b>Construction</b></p>
<p>Less than 90 days prior to construction, the VA will conduct surveys for the state-listed gopher tortoise (<i>Gopherus polyphemus</i>). If present, coordinate with FFWCC for permits to relocate individual animals to an approved off-site recipient location.</p>
<p>Adhere to the USFWS <i>Special Protection Measures for the Eastern Indigo Snake</i>.</p>
<p>Avoid any disturbance (no clearing, grading, parking, or staging of equipment or supplies) within permit-defined preservation areas. Accordingly, within the approximately 70-acre expansion area, only 62.6 acres will be developed, while the remaining 7.4 acres will be preserved. Of this preservation area, 4.1 acres is cypress preserved area and 3.3 acres is restoration wetland preserved area.</p>
<p>Use native, non-invasive species when revegetating land disturbed by construction to avoid the potential introduction of non-native or invasive species.</p>
<p><b>Operation</b></p>
<p>Utilize native, non-invasive, drought-resistant vegetation for area landscaping to reduce irrigation requirements.</p>

Landscape lawn areas primarily with turf grass, including Celebration bermudagrass®, St. Augustine grass ( <i>Stenotaphrum secundatum</i> ), and Bahiagrass ( <i>Paspalum notatum</i> ).
<b>NOISE</b>
<b>Construction</b>
Coordinate with the South Florida National Cemetery Administrator prior to mobilizing construction machinery through the Phase 1 cemetery to avoid and minimize noise-related disturbances to ongoing memorial services.
Schedule construction activities to minimize impacts to memorial services to the extent possible, unless there is a specific activity that would directly impact the current operation of the cemetery, in which case the activity would be scheduled outside of the normal construction schedule.
Comply with OSHA requirements to protect hearing of workers around loud construction equipment.
Use properly maintained and muffled vehicles and equipment.
Locate stationary operating equipment as far away from surrounding residents as possible. Shut down heavy equipment and other noise emitters when they are not in use.
<b>FLOODPLAINS, WETLANDS AND COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>Construction and Operation</b>
Complete and monitor onsite wetland restoration requirements according to USACE IP and SFWMD ERP specifications.
Avoid disturbance to other wetlands outside of the development area, as previously described for Soils and Habitat.
Prevent surface water runoff to the onsite and adjacent surface waters and avoid interaction with onsite and adjacent surface waters.
<b>SOLID WASTE AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS</b>
<b>Construction</b>
Recycle excess construction materials to the maximum extent practicable.
<b>Operation</b>
Manage solid wastes in designated areas and establish routine pickup and disposal to appropriate landfill facilities by qualified vendors.
Manage solid and hazardous wastes according to VA's solid and hazardous materials SOPs and management measures specified in NCA Master Construction Specifications, and applicable federal and state laws.
<b>TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING</b>
<b>Construction</b>
Coordinate with the South Florida National Cemetery Administrator to identify the preferred entrance and exit point at the South Florida National Cemetery, relative to daily mobilization of construction equipment and workers associated with the Phase 2 expansion.
Coordinate with the South Florida National Cemetery Administrator prior to mobilizing construction machinery through the Phase 1 cemetery to avoid interfering with cortege travel.
Stage construction equipment where it is not readily visible to visitors, maintaining the solemnity of the park-like setting of the Phase 1 South Florida National Cemetery.
If warranted, utilize flaggers to notify oncoming traffic of slower construction vehicles entering or exiting the cemetery from State Road 7.
<b>UTILITIES</b>
<b>Construction</b>
In advance of improving any utility connections at the site, communicate with the electric utility provider to ensure no disruptions occur within the South Florida National Cemetery or to other customers in the community.