

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY
FINAL SITE-SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT and FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE PHASE 2 EXPANSION AT THE
SOUTH FLORIDA NATIONAL CEMETERY
LAKE WORTH, PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery Administration (NCA) announces the availability of the Final Site-Specific Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Proposed Action to construct and operate the Phase 2 cemetery expansion within an approximately 76-acre area located in the northern portion within the existing boundary of the South Florida National Cemetery, located at 6501 N State Road 7, Lake Worth, Palm Beach County, Florida. The South Florida National Cemetery is currently utilizing existing burial space and capacity at a rate that is projected to exhaust available gravesites within the next 4 to 6 years. Implementing the Proposed Action would allow VA to continue providing burial opportunities needed by Veterans and their families in the south Florida region. The Phase 2 expansion design is consistent with the 2005 Master Plan and the South Florida Water Management District Environmental Resource Permit and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Individual Permit.

The Phase 2 expansion would take approximately 18 months to construct and would provide approximately 20,000 new casket, columbarium, and in-ground cremation sites, a flag assembly area, a roadway to connect the existing cemetery to the new burial areas, and a new stormwater retention pond to supply all of the irrigation water needed to maintain new landscaping in the Phase 2 expansion area. Construction would not disrupt or interfere with on-going memorial services.

Prior to completing the Final SEA, VA prepared a Draft SEA for a 30-day review by federal, state, and local regulatory agencies; federally recognized Native American Tribes with ancestral ties to the area; and the public. The Draft SEA documented potential environmental impacts associated with implementing the Proposed Action, and identified avoidance and management measures incorporated into the Proposed Action to ensure potential minor adverse impacts would not increase to a significant adverse level during construction and operation. A Notice of Availability announcing the release of the Draft SEA was published in the *Palm Beach Post* on March 28 and 31, 2019. No comments from the public were received. Comments from regulatory agencies and Native American Tribes were not opposed to the Proposed Action and have been incorporated and addressed in the Final SEA.

The Draft and Final SEA were prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), (Public Law 91-190, 42 USC 4321-4347 January 1, 1970), amendments, and VA's Implementing Regulations (38 CFR Part 26).

Upon review of the Final SEA, VA concludes that implementing the Proposed Action would not constitute a major federal action that would have a significant adverse impact on the quality of the human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2)(C) of NEPA of 1969. Accordingly, VA has finalized a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), which incorporates the Final SEA in its entirety by reference, and concludes that the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. The FONSI completes the NEPA review process for this Proposed Action. The Final SEA and FONSI are available for review in print at the South Florida National Cemetery and the Lantana Road Branch of the Palm Beach County Library at 4020 Lantana Road, Lake Worth, Florida, 33462, and can be electronically downloaded from VA's website at <http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/EA.asp>.

For additional information, contact: Mr. Fernando L. Fernández, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Construction & Facilities Management Office, 425 I (eye) Street, NW, Room 6W417b, Washington, D.C., 20001; by email at fernando.fernandez@va.gov; or by telephone at (202) 632-5529. Please reference "South Florida National Cemetery" in all correspondence.