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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bull Creek Fish Camp restaurant to be torn down after suffering irreparable damages from hurricanes Ian, Nicole

January 25, 2023 – The Bull Creek Fish Camp restaurant – part of Flagler County’s Bull Creek Campgrounds – will be torn down at the end of February having suffered irreparable damages suffered from hurricanes Ian and Nicole. The building, constructed in 1955, sat flooded with more than a foot of water for nearly a month.

“The costs necessary to fully restore the structure to its before-damage condition exceeds 50% of the structure’s valuation (excluding the valuation of the land) before the damage occurred,” County Administrator Heidi Petito told the Board of County Commissioners by email last week. “The basis for this determination includes, but is not limited to, structural, mechanical, and electrical damage.”

The building’s age was considered, as well as its construction – wood frame on wooden piles – which is not eligible for repair to current building code. Demolition and replacement would be required. Conservative estimates for new construction of a 2,800 square foot building are upwards of \$1.8 million.

“(This) is probably very conservative, as we would have to do additional boring samples because this area is built on a ‘cord road’ (layers of trees and soil) and we would likely have substantial costs for foundation work,” Petito said. “Today we have met with our tenant to make him aware of the county’s decision to red-tag the facility and proceed with demolition.”

Flagler County conducted an independent inspection, because the tenant had wanted to – at his own expense – clean and reopen the facility. The county also researched whether the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) would have resources or funding to address the damages and mitigate future issues to no avail.

“It was determined that no funding would be available through DEM or FEMA, and that our current insurance policy does not cover flooding,” Petito said. “This facility is a non-conforming structure that sits in the floodplain, and is ineligible for flood insurance.”

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Greg Hansen
District 2

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District 3

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District 4

Donald O’Brien, Jr.
District 5

The inspection found numerable problems with the structure: exterior high-water mark 3 feet above grade; could not verify “load path connection” at the slab; walls and structural wood posts were black, some soft and deteriorated from water damage; uneven flooring; sagging overhead beams; filth from both flood waters and septic backup; wiring impossible to inspect; and a host of other problems that, in short, are “substantial deficiencies throughout the structure.”

Flagler County in September 2022 assigned the original lease (2014) to a new tenant, Domenech Base Inc., which asked that 2 months rent be waived to allow time to prepare the restaurant to re-open and credit documented remedial costs for work undertaken toward future rent. Repairs were halted when Hurricane Ian hit, and early in October provided an additional two months for work to be completed. Hurricane Nicole struck on November 10.

The county met with the tenant on January 18 and offered to allow a food truck with a screened in pavilion, which was declined. The tenant will be reimbursed for materials with accompanying receipts that were damaged by the storms.

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