



Mitigation Takes Washout Out of Washout Road Problem

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Schenectady County, New York

Albany, NY – Perennial flood damage to a section of Washout Road in the Town of Glenville, located in Schenectady County, has been overcome thanks to a federal-state policy goal that provides extra funding to mitigate against future damages to public infrastructure.



Heavy and continuous rainfall in the spring and summer of 2000 scoured, eroded and washed away banks of the Washout Creek, in turn causing damage to the adjacent Washout Road - a common problem over the years.

At the request of Governor George E. Pataki, the President signed a major disaster declaration for New York State as a result of the 2000 flooding.

Among the recovery programs activated by the declaration was the Public Assistance Program. This program reimburses eligible government jurisdictions and certain non profits for costs for debris removal, emergency protective measures and the repair or restoration of damaged public infrastructure.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides 75 percent of the grant funding. The 25 percent non-federal share is made up from state and local funding. The New York State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) administers the program.

In most cases, Public Assistance repair and restoration funding brings the damaged infrastructure back to pre-disaster conditions.

However, a major FEMA and SEMO policy goal is to mitigate, where it is cost effective, when restoring damaged infrastructure so the repaired facility is better able to withstand future disaster damages. A little extra money spent now may save untold funds later.

In addition to restoring a retaining wall, embankment, shoulder and roadway along the creek, the Washout Road project also involved installation of a precast concrete T-wall for bank stabilization. That extra measure cost about \$38,000 and brought the total project cost to about \$134,000, of which the federal share was approximately \$100,000.

“This construction technique doesn’t apply everywhere, but at this location it worked pretty well,” according to project engineer Paul Sheldon.

Since the work was completed, officials said, the creek embankment has been stable during severe weather and road damages have been avoided.

Joe Ryan, Director of Public Works for Schenectady County, is happy with the results. “That area had been a chronic problem for years,” he said.

Ryan is also a supporter of spending extra money now if it means preventing problems in the future. “I see a lot of things that get fixed that ought to be upgraded,” he said. “We’re going to pay now or pay later.”

“Mitigation activities such as these are a smart way of doing business by expending monies now to lessen the threat on communities before an event occurs in the future,” said James W. Tuffey, Director of the State Emergency Management Office.

“This is an excellent example of an investment in infrastructure improvements that will pay dividends for years to come,” said FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer Marianne C. Jackson.

FEMA prepares the nation for all hazards and manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates mitigation activities, trains first responders, works with state and local emergency managers, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration.

Activity/Project Location

Geographical Area: **Single County in a State**

FEMA Region: **Region II**

State: **New York**

County: **Schenectady County**

City/Community: **East Glenville**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Public**

Hazard Type: **Flooding**

Activity/Project Type: **Flood Control**

Activity/Project Start Date: **03/2001**

Activity/Project End Date: **12/2001**

Funding Source: **Other FEMA funds/ US Department of Homeland Security**

Funding Recipient: **Local Government**

Funding Recipient Name: **Schenectady County**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **\$134,000.00 (Actual)**

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal
Disaster? **Yes**

Federal Disaster #: **1335 , 07/21/2000**

Value Tested By Disaster? **Yes**

Tested By Federal Disaster #: **No Federal Disaster specified**

Year First Tested: **2002**

Repetitive Loss Property? **Yes**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: <http://www.floodsmart.gov/>

Reference URL 2: <http://www.semo.state.ny.us/>

Main Points

- Heavy and continuous rainfall in the spring and summer of 2000 scoured, eroded and washed away banks of the Washout Creek, in turn causing damage to the adjacent Washout Road - a common problem over the years.
- In addition to restoring a retaining wall, embankment, shoulder and roadway along the creek, the Washout Road project also involved installation of a precast concrete T-wall for bank stabilization.
- Since the work was completed, officials said, the creek embankment has been stable during severe weather and road damages have been avoided.