



Salisbury Township and the Village of Rutland

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Meigs County, Ohio

Salisbury, MD - Salisbury Township is home to the river-crossing town of Pomeroy, population 2,200, near the southeastern corner of the state where U.S. Route 33 crosses the Ohio River into West Virginia.



Similar to most river towns, Pomeroy and the surrounding township have dealt with high water many times in their nearly 200 year history. Unfortunately, cycles of drought followed by heavy rain, deforestation of some area hillsides and increased runoff from recently widened state and federal highways contributed to even more frequent local flood damage during the late 1990's.

The village of Rutland is about five miles west of Pomeroy. It also has a history of flood damage, but the culprits there are Little Leading and Beech Grove Creeks, which carry runoff from the steep bluffs above the Ohio Valley through the village of about 500 residents.

When flash flooding occurs along the creeks, it often blocks State Route 124, the main east/west highway, and other emergency routes; and poses a serious safety threat to local residents, nearby property and public infrastructure.

The drenching rains and excessive runoff of March 1-2, 1997, hit Pomeroy and Rutland residents hard...but that disaster also provided an opportunity for some local families to escape the repeating cycle of damage, repair and more damage through funding for post-recovery mitigation projects. Those projects included elevation of 18 homes that had suffered significant damage in several previous floods.

Kenny and Tammy Searles needed \$64,000 in FEMA grants and SBA loans to put their home on Depot Street in Rutland back together and replace essentials destroyed in the 1997 flood. Victims of regular but less severe flooding throughout the 1990s, the Searles 1997 experience convinced them to accept an offer of HMGP funding to raise their first floor above the local Base Flood Elevation. Total cost: \$32,700--roughly half of their 1997 repair and recovery expenses. When high water comes again--even at the "100 year flood level," the Searles are confident they will be safe, damage to the living space of their home will be avoided, and the public investment in elevating their property will prove to have been a wise one.

Lilly Kennedy lives with her son in a two-story frame house just down Depot Street from the Searles. She had gone through regular basement flooding for many years, and estimates she had spent nearly \$10,000 for out-of-pocket clean-up, repairs and other recovery costs prior to 1997. That year the water rose to a depth of more than three feet on the first floor; and Ms. Kennedy received more than \$19,000 in federal and state recovery assistance, \$9,000 of which went for structural repairs. When local officials contacted her about having her home elevated as part of the Rutland mitigation project, it didn't take long for her to say yes. In 1998, the house was elevated by eight feet, to a level above the local Base Flood Elevation, at a cost of \$18,700. Less than two years later, when major flooding hit the area again in 2000, no water entered the Kennedy home. Based on the height of water in that event, former Rutland Mayor Joanne Eads estimated that if the Kennedy home had not been elevated, repair costs would have been between \$10,000 and \$15,000. At that rate, by avoiding damage in one more serious flood, the Kennedy elevation project will have paid for itself in just a few years.

Roy and Iola Howell of Salisbury Township, a couple in their 70's, have lived in the same house since their marriage. Between 1990-97, their home suffered major flood damage three times. Over that period, the Howells spent nearly \$9,000 of their own money for repair and recovery expenses, and collected more than \$31,000 in claims from the National Flood Insurance Program. Based on their loss experience, they were identified as an appropriate target for mitigation, and agreed to have their property elevated above the Base Flood Elevation. Final cost of the project turned out to be just \$14,700--less than half their cumulative insurance claims for the two previous floods. In February 2000, when the next flood emergency struck, no water entered the Howells' home. Based on the depth of water around the house, Mr. Howell estimated that at the former grade level it would have suffered nearly \$20,000 in damages -meaning that savings made possible by the elevation have already exceeded the cost of the project.

Activity/Project Location

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

FEMA Region: **Region V**

State: **Ohio**

County: **Meigs County**

City/Community: **Pomeroy; Rutland**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Private**

Hazard Type: **Flooding**

Activity/Project Type: **Elevation, Structural**

Activity/Project Start Date: **04/1997**

Activity/Project End Date: **12/1998**

Funding Source: **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)**

Funding Recipient: **Property Owner - Residential**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **Amount Not Available**

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal
Disaster? **Yes**

Federal Disaster #: **1164 , 03/04/1997**

Value Tested By Disaster? **Yes**

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

Year First Tested: **2000**

Repetitive Loss Property? **Unknown**

Reference URLs

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

Reference URL 2: **<http://www.ema.ohio.gov/>**

Main Points

- Similar to most river towns, Pomeroy and the surrounding township have dealt with high water many times in their nearly 200 year history.
- The drenching rains and excessive runoff of March 1-2 1997 hit Pomeroy and Rutland residents hard...but that disaster also provided an opportunity for some local families to escape the repeating cycle of damage, repair and more damage through funding for post-recovery mitigation projects.
- Those projects included elevation of 18 homes that had suffered significant damage in several previous floods.