



Schoharie Relocation Project Avoids Flood Damage

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Schoharie County, New York

Gilboa, NY– A major relocation of households, structures and a road in the Town of Gilboa is credited with avoiding subsequent flood damage, even during the early-April storms this year that led to Schoharie County’s inclusion in a federal disaster declaration.



Following a disaster in January 1996, the town embarked on a \$1.5 million project, aided by federal and state funding, to take people and facilities out of harm’s way in a perennial flooding area located in the Schoharie Creek floodplain.

Several houses along Stryker Road that had been damaged in the 1996 flooding were purchased and demolished, an historic church and town hall were relocated to higher ground and the road itself was rerouted out of the floodplain.

Judy Cary, the county’s Director of Emergency Management, said the Stryker Road project clearly accomplished its purpose. “Even a heavy spring runoff would flood those areas,” she said. “We don’t have to worry about them any more.”

Major funding for the project came from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through programs administered by the State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) - the Public Assistance Program that helps pay to repair disaster-damaged infrastructure. Funding also came from the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), which assists state and local governments to reduce long-term risk to people and property from natural disasters.

Rather than merely repairing Stryker Road and the buildings on it following the 1996 flooding, the Town of Gilboa decided to relocate the road to higher ground. That required agreement by all property owners to accept a buyout, said Shane Nickle, Senior Planner with the Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency.

Some 15 homes were purchased and then demolished and buried on site. A church and the old town hall were moved about half a mile to higher ground, and the road was realigned and rebuilt outside the flood plain.

The HMGP funded approximately \$900,000 for the purchase of the homes and the relocation of the town hall and church. The \$600,000 road reconstruction was funded through the Public Assistance Program.

The federal share of the total project was about \$1.1 million. The remainder was paid with local resources and state reimbursement through Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act funds.

“In April 2005, flood waters once again went over old Stryker Road,” Nickle said. “There is no doubt that the original Stryker Road and some of the homes would have been damaged had the 1996 project not occurred.”

“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 SEMO Director and State Coordinating Officer James W. Tuffey.

“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 an incident of national significance. 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. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.

Activity/Project Location

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

FEMA Region: **Region II**

State: **New York**

County: **Schoharie County**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Public/Private Partnership**

Hazard Type: **Flooding**

Activity/Project Type: **Relocation**

Activity/Project Start Date: **01/1996**

Activity/Project End Date: **06/2000**

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

Funding Recipient: **State Government**

Funding Recipient Name: **FEMA**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **\$1,500,000.00 (Actual)**

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal
Disaster? **Yes**

Federal Disaster #: **1095 , 01/24/1996**

Value Tested By Disaster? **Yes**

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

Year First Tested: **2005**

Repetitive Loss Property? **Yes**

Reference URLs

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

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

Main Points

- Following a disaster in January 1996, the Town of Gilboa embarked on a \$1.5 million project, aided by federal and state funding, to take people and facilities out of harm's way in a perennial flooding area located in the Schoharie Creek floodplain.
- Major funding for the project came from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through programs administered by the State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) - the Public Assistance Program that helps pay to repair disaster-damaged infrastructure.
- Some 15 homes were purchased and then demolished and buried on site. A church and the old town hall were moved about half a mile to higher ground, and the road was realigned and rebuilt outside the flood plain.



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