



Property Acquisitions Reduce Flood Losses

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Dauphin County, Pennsylvania

Jednota Flats, PA - Jednota Flats in Lower Swatara Township floods almost every year. The area sits in a flood plain, and the homes endure up to ten feet of flood water during major rainstorms.



After flooding four times within twenty months during 2003 and 2004, the township's Emergency Management Agency (EMA) Coordinator, Alan Knoche, looked for a way to reduce flood losses in Jednota Flats.

With the help of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA), the community applied for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) for an acquisitions project. Under this grant program, FEMA provides funding to communities enabling them to purchase homes suffering repetitive flood damage. These homes are then purchased from the owner by the community at fair market value and converted into open space. It is also a cost-effective program saving money on future flood insurance claims, cleanup costs, and allows the municipality to conserve valuable resources.

"FEMA and PEMA officials have been cooperative, helpful and responsive throughout the entire buyout process," Knoche continued, "They are always available to answer any questions I have."

After approving PEMA's submission of Lower Swatara's application, FEMA provided \$186,166 to buy out the two homes most vulnerable to flooding. "Every time we would have a rain event, these homes would flood, sometimes above the first floor," Knoche explained.

In mid-June, the township closed on the two properties. Just days later, the homes flooded again. This time, however, the grateful families had already moved to new higher, drier homes.

"Not only have we saved families, we no longer have to endanger others, like our firefighters, who rescue those homeowners that are flooded, this program saves lives" Knoche stated.

Their flood damaged homes are scheduled for demolition in late fall or early winter, and the town is planning to allow the neighboring wetlands to expand into the newly acquired open space.

Activity/Project Location

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

FEMA Region: **Region III**

State: **Pennsylvania**

County: **Dauphin County**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Public**
Hazard Type: **Flooding**
Activity/Project Type: **Acquisition/Buyouts**
Structure Type: **Wood Frame**
Activity/Project Start Date: **08/2005**
Activity/Project End Date: **Ongoing**
Funding Source: **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)**
Funding Recipient: **Property Owner - Residential**
Application/Project Number: **9999**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **\$186,166.00 (Actual)**

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal
Disaster? **Yes**
Federal Disaster #: **1485 , 08/23/2003**
Federal Disaster Year: **2003**
Value Tested By Disaster? **No**
Repetitive Loss Property? **Yes**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: <http://www.pema.state.pa.us/>
Reference URL 2: <http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/hmgp/>

Main Points

- Homes in Jednota Flats, Pennsylvania flood with up to 10 feet of water almost every year
- With the help of PEMA, the town applied for a HMGP grant
- The two most vulnerable homes were bought out and are to be converted into open park space
- Several days after the township closed on the properties, they flooded again but the families had already moved out



Picture of property after demolition



Picture of home being demolished