



## Winning The War Against Flooding

### Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

#### *Genesee County, New York*

**Batavia, NY** - Plagued by repeated flooding from the Tonawanda Creek, the City of Batavia, located in Genesee County in western New York, suffered millions of dollars in damage to its homes and businesses over the years. So the citizens of Batavia decided to do something about it.



One of the first steps was to enact and enforce a strict building code in compliance with the requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to reduce losses to new structures in the area. The next step was to remove some of the causes of flooding. This was done in several ways. For example, a dike and berm system was built around Kibbe Park, located on the banks of the creek on the south side of the City. These structures channeled high waters into the park, containing it within the area rather than spreading throughout.

The community then cleared the creek within the City limits; improved the creek bank to reduce snagging; and installed flap gates on storm outlets to stop back flow through the system. The community has been successful in keeping streams in the City clear of debris--one of the keys to prevent flooding--and is in the process of obtaining permits to keep banks located upstream clear.

The January 1998 storms caused Tonawanda Creek to rise to levels associated with a 25-year event. Fortunately, there was only minor damage due to flooding and only a small residential area along Tonawanda Creek suffered any appreciable damage. The involved citizens of Batavia believe their efforts, which have been relatively inexpensive and already bearing fruit, will, in the long run provide immense savings to homeowners and businesses.

Standard Homeowner's insurance policies do not cover flood damage. The National Flood Insurance Program makes Federally backed flood insurance available to homeowners, renters, and business owners in participating communities.

#### Activity/Project Location

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

FEMA Region: **Region II**

State: **New York**

County: **Genesee County**

City/Community: **Batavia**

## Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Public**  
Hazard Type: **Severe Storm; Flooding**  
Activity/Project Type: **Flood Control**  
Activity/Project Start Date: **01/1996**  
Activity/Project End Date: **Ongoing**  
Funding Source: **Local Sources**  
Funding Recipient: **Local Government**  
Funding Recipient Name: **City of Batavia**

## Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **Amount Not Available**

## Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal Disaster? **Unknown**  
Value Tested By Disaster? **Yes**  
Tested By Federal Disaster #: **No Federal Disaster specified**  
Year First Tested: **1998**  
Repetitive Loss Property? **Unknown**

## Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: <http://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/pages/index.jsp>  
Reference URL 2: <http://www.semo.state.ny.us/>

## Main Points

- Enacted and enforced a strict building code in compliance with the requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)
- Removed some of the causes of flooding, for example, a dike and berm system to channel high waters into the park, containing it within the area rather than spreading throughout.
- Cleared the creek within the City limits, installed flap gates, and improved the creek bank to reduce snagging or obtaining debris