



## Historic Town's Flood Concerns Alleviated With Buyouts

### Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

#### *Champaign County, Illinois*



**Champaign County, IL** – Established in 1827, Sidney is a township in the Champaign-Urbana metropolitan area. As far back as residents can recall, the village has been confronted with flooding issues. Boating, a sport that is relished today, was a matter of necessity as far back as 1913 for Sidney residents attempting trips into town as water would simply inundate the city's main street.

"In 1939, water came up to one inch of entering into the town's hall," recalls Eleanor Fear, a former librarian for the town. "Since then, it has repeatedly come very close to that, about three inches."

With more than 50 percent of its landmass located within a floodplain, Sidney's residents continue to ready themselves for flood events.

"The Salt Fork of the Vermillion River empties into the small creek that runs through the village. We still get lots of rain and lots of flooding," said Janet Akers, village clerk.

Akers has been the village clerk for approximately 16 years. In that role, she also serves as grant administrator. Sidney's initial attempt at flood mitigation came in the form of an acquisition project in August 1999 following a July 1993 flood event. The project called for buyouts of 10 homes, which reportedly received the brunt of the flood.

"The water flows all over town but the north end seems worst. These were the houses that sustained the worst damage," acknowledged Akers. "They would always get the brunt of the flooding. The way the water travels, it's close to their property."

Homes in that area had an average value of \$40,000. They had flooded at least seven or eight times, with flood waters reaching heights of two to three feet inside the homes.

Again in June 2008, waters from the Salt Fork of the Vermillion River dumped into the small creek in the center of the town causing it to overtop its banks. The downtown area was closed for two days.

"We had standing water," said Akers. "It doesn't take long for the water to recede but when it's here, it causes havoc."

The acquisition project has reportedly worked wonders for the town. In the wake of the June 2008 flood, water edged onto the green space which at one time was occupied by homes.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funded 75 percent of the mitigation project through its Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). The funds were administered by the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA). The total project funding was \$295,945.21.

"The areas have returned to green space, and we've planted some trees on them," said Akers. "On the [area] that flooded the most, we have created a really nice park."

Akers continued to praise acquisitions as a mitigation measure in combating floods.

"I think the acquisition project was a fantastic idea. It was a win-win situation for Sidney. It looks so much better without some of these houses that were in disrepair and it helped the people so much."

### Activity/Project Location

Geographical Area: **Single County (County-wide)**

FEMA Region: **Region V**

State: **Illinois**

County: **Champaign County**

### Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Private**

Hazard Type: **Flooding**

Activity/Project Type: **Acquisition/Buyouts; Flood Control**

Structure Type: **Wood Frame**

Activity/Project Start Date: **09/1999**

Activity/Project End Date: **05/2005**

Funding Source: **State sources**

Funding Recipient: **Local Government**

### Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **\$381,363.00 (Actual)**

### Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal  
Disaster? **Yes**

Federal Disaster #: **997 , 07/09/1993**

Federal Disaster Year: **1993**

Value Tested By Disaster? **Yes**

Tested By Federal Disaster #: **1771 , 06/24/2008**

Repetitive Loss Property? **Yes**

### Reference URLs

No URLs were submitted

## Main Points

No Main Points were entered.



Waters of Vermillion River dump into the small creek that flows through the town



An Acquisition Project gave rise to a park in the small town of Sidney, Illinois