



FEMA

Escaping the Water Frankstown, PA

Frankstown, PA- Some Linds Crossing residents refer to the Little Juniata River that flows by their houses as "The Gentle Giant." On a normal day, the stream is gentle, shallow and slow moving, though hardly a giant. After a hard rain upstream, however, it quickly becomes gigantic and not at all gentle. Linds Crossing was developed in 1911 as a "Summer Home Farm" in rural Blair County, a modest recreation area of weekend and summer cottages, small frame houses huddled densely along the Little Juniata.

Over the years, the neighborhood in Frankstown Township, near Hollidaysburg, evolved. Today, most residents live there full time. Homeowners praise its beauty, peace and quiet and absence of urban stress. Many have lived there for decades and most wish to stay, but they pay a price for the advantages they extol. The same quiet river that provides boating and fishing, refreshing summer swims and cool breezes can change dramatically with little warning. The Little Juniata floods often. Small, localized bouts of high water also are commonplace.

The price was becoming too high. Jean Jordan had lived in her house more than 20 years. The flooding risk would have made her house difficult to sell. She was certain she could not get enough for it to buy anything similar in a safer spot, but she was experiencing "flooding about three times a year, and it was becoming "too hard to clean up after the floods."

Under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Jordan could stay in her home but not run the risk of continual flooding. Raising Jordan's house on a new concrete-block foundation put it above flood level, but left it in its surroundings. "I'm so glad it's up in the air," she said. " I don't know how to act."

Dave and Wendy Reighard took a different approach under the HMGP umbrella. They decided to sell their house and move a short distance away. As much as they liked their old location, the "peace of mind" they enjoy in their new home is "priceless."

The driving force behind the Linds Crossing Project was Richard Furmanchik, executive director, and Beverly Pounds, deputy executive director, of the County of Blair Redevelopment and Housing Authority. They shepherded the project from beginning to end. In the process, they won the gratitude and respect of a good many residents.

Wendy Reighard agreed the "program was a success...The number one goal was to get people out of harm's way, and it definitely did that." She praised the attention Furmanchik and Pounds paid to the concerns of the Linds Crossing population. "They listened to people," she said. "I'm very pleased with the way the people in this office treated us." The fourth time the Reighards were flooded was in 1997, they were negotiating with a realtor for their new house. "We had moved everything downstairs in preparation for the move," David Reighard recalled. "The water came through and trashed (the house) two weeks before we were ready to move."

All told, 38 Linds Crossing residents moved above flood levels, and 37 moved out of the area entirely through the HMGP project.



**Blair County,
Pennsylvania**



Quick Facts

Sector:

Public/Private Partnership

Cost:

Amount Not Available

Primary Activity/Project:

Acquisition/Buyouts

Primary Funding:

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)