



# FEMA

## *Geneva: Buy Outs and Acquisitions Keeping Residents Dry*

**Geneva, AL** - Geneva has a long history of flooding. In 1861, the town was destroyed by a flood and relocated to higher ground. Since the start of the 20th century, Geneva has been flooded four times. Three of those events occurred during the 1990s. Although not all residents of Geneva were hit hard by each flood, the small residential area of Baptist Bottoms has always received the brunt of the damage. According to the Geneva City Clerk, "With the exception of what they could carry out during the evacuation, they [Baptist Bottoms residents] lost everything in the [1990 and 1994] floods."

To stem the cycle of disasters, Geneva applied for hazard mitigation grant funds to acquire structures most at risk. FEMA agreed to fund the buyout of dozens of buildings within the floodway of Double Bridges Creek in Baptist Bottoms. Local officials began an aggressive campaign to convince homeowners in the flood-prone Baptist Bottoms area to sell their homes and relocate out of the floodplain. Eventually, they submitted a grant application to FEMA for the acquisition of 54 homes. An initial benefit-cost analysis determined that the project would be cost-effective. All of the structures are located deep in the floodplain, and it was clear that damages from repeated flooding in the future would take a heavy toll on the community.

Of the original 54 structures included in the application, 30 were actually acquired and removed before the March 1998 flood. A revised and updated benefit-cost analysis for this group found that the acquisition was even more cost-effective than initially projected.



**Geneva County,  
Alabama**



### **Quick Facts**

Sector:

**Public**

Cost:

**\$672,555.00 (Estimated)**

Primary Activity/Project:

**Acquisition/Buyouts**

Primary Funding:

**Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)**