



FEMA

A Plan for All Seasons: Hazard Mitigation Planning Helps to Prioritize

Shawnee, OK - The Citizen Potawatomi Nation (CPN) tradition teaches respect for nature and how she refurbishes the earth with winds, floods, and ice storms. Over an 18 month process starting in 2003 the CPN identified disaster risk, prioritized their probability, and documented planned projects to reduce damage. By following the guidance of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, the CPN created the first plan approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the State of Oklahoma.

CPN Safety and Housekeeping Director Tim Zientek said, "As we prepared the plan we discovered flooding posed the most risk and not tornadoes, though more tornadoes form in Oklahoma and Texas than other states. The floods we experienced in 2007 caused over a million dollars in damage."

Hazard mitigation planning requirements include documenting the history of the land and weather events as well as vulnerabilities to disaster risks. The CPN gathered statistical data and conducted surveys and interviews. Discussing weather history with tribal elders and long-time city residents helped the planners understand how natural forces affected both people and property. Interviews and survey responses explained nature's impact, the efficacy of actions taken by Nation members, event dates, and severity.

Zientek believes involving members of CPN and the community added to the acceptance of the plan, understanding of the documented risks, and improved support for the projects that would reduce or eliminate damage from those risks. And since plan development requires documented community participation, the interviews and surveys served a dual purpose.

To maintain plan accuracy and currency, the Nation reviews the plan several times a year with annual leadership consideration. As a result of these reviews the leadership reshapes its project priorities based on need and funding. For example, the flooding of Squirrel Creek in 2007 would have had lesser outcomes had CPN been able to fund a High Flow Bypass, a project estimated at \$5million but with a projected savings of \$12 million.

Zientek said, "Writing and researching the plan enabled the leadership to regain a sense of urgency to support projects that helped us grow a sustainable future, guarding the lives and property of those who live or visit our land."



Tribal,
FEMA Region VI



Quick Facts

Year:

2007

Sector:

Public/Private Partnership

Cost:

\$150,000.00 (Estimated)

Primary Activity/Project:

Land Use/Planning

Primary Funding:

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)