



FEMA

Two Tangier Island Elevated Homes Rising Above the Wrath of Isabel

Tangier Island, Virginia — As a third generation Tangier Island resident, Sarah Crockett is no stranger to storm tides and the damages they create. “With [Hurricane] Floyd [1999] the water got into my house, ruined the carpets and floor and stuff. Tide came in once before, too, but that was long ago.” After floodwaters broke into her home, she decided it was time to put a stop to it. Help came from FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). FEMA provides up to 75 percent of the project cost, with the remaining 25 percent coming from some other non-Federal source. This can come from the commonwealth, local government or private sources.

The HMGP funds paid to have the Crockett house’s elevated three concrete block courses above ground level. “My neighbor, who stayed on the island during [Hurricane] Isabel, told me water came up to the third row of blocks on my house,” Crockett said. This time, however, floodwaters threatened but never entered the house. A great relief to Crockett since “this here island is a little bit of heaven.” With her home more resistant to disaster damages because of the HMGP work, she has no intention of leaving.

The home of Betty Dise, one of Crockett’s neighbors, also fared well during Hurricane Isabel because of mitigation efforts. During Hurricane Floyd, Dise had water above her ankles throughout the house. Because of that experience, she also decided to participate in the HMGP elevation project. She filled out an application at the HMGP meeting at the local school shortly after Hurricane Floyd, even though she did have flood insurance that covered the personal property lost in Hurricane Floyd. She also encouraged family and friends to apply.

After being chosen for the elevation project, Crockett contributed \$3,500, 5 percent of the total project cost. She said, “It was money well spent. I told family and friends that even if they need to get a loan to cover their contribution they should do it.”

Dise feels very secure now that the house has been through another disaster without being affected. However, she is sad for the other residents who did suffer damage again. “Isabel damaged my brother’s house, the roof is torn apart and the floors and carpet were ruined. Thank the Lord I only lost some shingles,” Dise said. Her house was surrounded by water, according to her son who kept watch on the property, but it didn’t get in this time.

Bill Reynold, town manager of Tangier, is working hard on plans to get more homes on Tangier Island elevated above the flood level. Hurricane Isabel damaged 99 homes and 50 businesses. The total loss resulting from Isabel is estimated to be \$1,963,325. Reynold’s own home had 10 inches of water in it. “We met with the mitigation folks from FEMA and know the steps... that are necessary to get more houses raised. I have 65 residents that are requesting to participate in an elevation project.”



Accomack County,
Virginia



Quick Facts

Sector:

Private

Cost:

Amount Not Available

Primary Activity/Project:

Elevation, Structural

Primary Funding:

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)