



Doing the Right Thing in Clifton, Texas

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Bosque County, Texas

Bosque County, TX – Flood waters repeatedly inundated a small community causing extensive damage. In 1991, a record flood devastated the small town of Clifton, Texas. Some homes were totally destroyed and others required major renovation. The city sought measures to minimize the effects of future flooding by initiating buyouts as a mitigation practice.



In south central Bosque County, the town of Clifton is part of the hill country of Central Texas. With a population of approximately 3,500, the town supports light-industrial and agricultural-based employment. It is also a nesting place for the Bosque River.

“Flooding is no stranger to Clifton. I have seen that annually,” said Jimmy Burch, director of Public Works. “Recent flooding created an island around our old armory.” About the 2007 flood, he added, “Water was 12-18 inches deep. The little bridge was under water. Flood waters got up to the houses. If we had had 4-6 more inches we may have had a repeat of 1991.”

The Acquisition Project was initiated in August 1993 and completed in May 1995 at a cost of \$226,252. Clifton received an \$113,126 grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through its Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). The funds were administered by the Governor’s Division of Emergency Management Agency. The project acquired 18 private real properties (structure and land) and 13 lots.

The HMGP paid 50 percent of the cost. On December 3, 1993, the President signed the Hazard Mitigation and Relocation Act of 1993, which significantly increased funding available for hazard mitigation grants under section 404 of the Stafford Act. Presently, HMGP pays 75 percent on approved projects that will prevent or reduce damage from storms and other natural hazards. These grants are made available for both public and private projects.

Property acquired with HMGP funds must be converted into open space and may not be built on in the future. The purpose is to remove people and their homes from harm’s way. Participation in acquisition projects is voluntary. Some choose not to participate because of sentimental attachment to their homes, while others welcome the opportunity.

“I willingly participated,” stated Evelyn Wright, whose home was acquired in the project. “In April 1990 my house had 2 feet of water. My carpet and furniture were ruined. I remained in the neighborhood. I had been living there since 1974. I didn’t think it would flood again.”

In December, 1991 she watched as the river again rose above its banks. “We stood with tears in our eyes as the water continued to rise. I had never seen anything so devastating. My house had seven feet of water. My neighbor’s house was old. It completely fell apart.”

Fearing her home could not withstand another flood of that magnitude, Wright took the opportunity to get out of the neighborhood. “I was thankful to God that I could get the money to get a new start. I could not have withstood another flood, emotionally nor financially.”

The project created green space and a park. “We have tried to create parks in all of the acquired properties. The children are taking advantage of the green space for soccer games,” said Burch.

“Buyouts, to be honest with you, did a wonderful thing for the people and for this community,” said city administrator, Charles Mc Lean. “During the recent flood, water got into the park and covered the whole area. Acquiring the property and demolishing those homes was a smart thing to do. It was the right thing to do. If the homes had remained, we would have the same tragedy over and over again. This was a way to avoid it.”

Activity/Project Location

Geographical Area: **Single County in a State**

FEMA Region: **Region VI**

State: **Texas**

County: **Bosque County**

City/Community: **Clifton**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Public/Private Partnership**

Hazard Type: **Flooding**

Activity/Project Type: **Acquisition/Buyouts**

Structure Type: **Wood Frame; Concrete, Reinforced**

Activity/Project Start Date: **08/1993**

Activity/Project End Date: **05/1995**

Funding Source: **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)**

Funding Recipient: **Local Government**

Application/Project Number: **L-169**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **\$226,252.00 (Actual)**

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal
Disaster? **Yes**

Federal Disaster #: **900 , 04/12/1991**

Federal Disaster Year: **1991**

Value Tested By Disaster? **Yes**

Tested By Federal Disaster #: **No Federal Disaster specified**

Year First Tested: **1997**

Repetitive Loss Property? **Yes**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: <http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/hmgp/index.shtm>

Reference URL 2: <http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/hmgp/index.shtm>

Main Points

- In 1991, a record flood devastated the small town of Clifton, Texas.
- The Acquisition Project was initiated in August 1993 and completed in May 1995 at a cost of \$226,252.
- Clifton received an \$113,126 grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through its Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP).
- Presently, HMGP pays 75 percent on approved projects that will prevent or reduce damage from storms and other natural hazards.
- The project created green space and a park.



View of the community following the flood.



Park created as a result of acquisition.