



# FEMA

## Preventing Community Isolation Mitigation in Yabucoa, Puerto Rico

**Yabucoa, PR** - During any heavy rain event, almost 10,000 residents of Barrio Guayabota and Barrio Quebradilla in Yabucoa faced the possibility of losing the road at Coquí Bridge, which is their connection with downtown Yabucoa and other communities. If this road got damaged or destroyed, it meant a 30-kilometer detour to get assistance or provisions.

Natividad Ruiz was born and raised in Barrio Guayabota and has endured this situation many times. "Just last year, as soon as it started raining heavily, we would worry about how much time we had left before our community would be isolated," said Ruiz. The floodwaters would scour the creek bank and cause washout of the road.

The FEMA Public Assistance Program normally funds repair of public infrastructure to pre-existing conditions. However, in this case, it was clear that future rains would again damage the road and bridge approach. Thus, after the November 2003 flooding event, a mitigation measure was undertaken, which involved the installation of gabions (rock filled wired baskets) in areas eroded by floodwaters. The gabions were later covered with earth.

"With the completion of this project, even with all the rain brought by Tropical Storm Jeanne (2004), the road never collapsed, and that benefited both communities," Ruiz explained.



Yabucoa Municipio,  
Puerto Rico



### Quick Facts

Sector:

**Public**

Cost:

**\$5,772.00 (Actual)**

Primary Activity/Project:

**Flood Control**

Primary Funding:

**Other FEMA funds/ US Department of  
Homeland Security**