



FEMA

Home Buy-Outs Create Green Space on Dauphin Island

Dauphin Island, AL – Dauphin Island has created a more hurricane-resistant community. Property acquisitions have taken place as mitigation measures to protect renters, owners, and businesses from frequent flooding caused by hurricanes and storms. Recreational areas, green spaces, and bird habitats occupy land where repetitive loss properties once stood.

Standing guard between Mobile Bay and the vast Gulf of Mexico is Dauphin Island, a true barrier island with dunes, maritime forests, salt marshes, tidal flats, and two freshwater lakes. The island is 14 miles long and 1 ¼ miles wide at the widest point. Less than half of the island is inhabited; 8 miles on the western side are undeveloped. Dauphin Island is vital for providing protection to the mainland from severe weather events. Island officials are very experienced in planning and preparing for hurricanes and floods.

Since Hurricane Katrina (2005), Dauphin Island has begun requiring an additional two feet of freeboard above the Base Flood Elevation for all new construction to help reduce the risk of future flood damages to properties.

Plagued by frequent flooding from heavy rains and hurricanes, Dauphin Island officials were motivated to acquire repetitive loss properties from property owners. The acquisition was funded by FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and administered by the Alabama Emergency Management Agency.

When homes and businesses experience heavy flooding (especially multiple flood events), FEMA's buyout program is a cost-effective and long-term solution for community floodplain managers and owners of flood-damaged property. This mitigation activity restores the natural function of the floodplain, eliminates the risk of future damages to those structures removed from the floodplain, and reduces the potential for future property losses by limiting the kinds of future improvements permissible on the land acquired. The resulting open space can be used for flood resistant projects such as parks, picnic areas, walking paths, basketball courts, and wildlife refuges.

A total of three homes were included in an acquisition project that was completed after Hurricane Ivan (2004). "There is no question about what would have happened to these homes during Katrina if they had not been [removed from the floodplain]. They would have flooded," said Mayor Jeff Collier.

One acquired property bordering Salt Creek is now a popular park located near an elementary school. The cost of the HMGP acquisition totaled \$218,140. Visitors enjoy modern playground equipment, picnic tables, benches, and shade trees. Pryor Park, a property acquired through the HMGP for a total of \$204,262, is located in a quiet residential neighborhood. It is enclosed by a picket fence and has benches for relaxing. The third property was acquired for \$101,355, and is now green space for birds to enjoy.

"Dauphin Island is unique because of its location, tourists, secondary homeowners, and specialty shops. Because of its makeup, the effects are far reaching when severe damage occurs from hurricanes and frequent flooding," said Mayor Collier.



Mobile County, Alabama



Quick Facts

Sector:

Public

Cost:

\$523,757.00 (Actual)

Primary Activity/Project:

Acquisition/Buyouts

Primary Funding:

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)