Buyout Saves Two Families from Another Flood

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Greenbrier County, West Virginia

Greenbrier County, WV - Every time heavy rain fell in western Greenbrier County, West Virginia, two properties in low-lying areas along Anjean Road in Rupert and Route 60 in Charmco suffered serious flooding. The homes were always at risk. Spring rainstorms and snow melt repeatedly caused major damage to these properties. They would have been damaged again during the severe storms and flooding of March 2010 if actions were not taken.

In 2008, Al Whitaker, Director of Greenbrier County Emergency Services, decided it was time to address this problem as part of the county’s overall mitigation plan. After the county determined that the two homeowners voluntarily wanted to sell their properties, the county applied to the West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management for acquisition funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA’s) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

This funding becomes available as a result of a presidential disaster declaration and assists states and local jurisdictions implement long-term mitigation measures. FEMA funds up to 75 percent of an approved project; the remainder comes from state and local sources. Acquisitions, sometimes called “buyouts,” are voluntary. Both homeowners agreed to participate and were paid pre-flood market value.

During a break in the rough winter of 2009, the demolition contractor removed the structures, leveled and seeded the properties. The green space is now deed-restricted, which means no structures can be built on the land in the future.

An inspection by local officials in April 2010 showed open lots with grass beginning to grow. The adjacent property owners are now paying the county token rent of $1 to use the land for family gardens. The project cost for acquisition, demolition, and site work was $105,000, of which FEMA funded $78,750.

Greenbrier County officials believe it was money well spent. Whitaker said the former residents have relocated to safer areas, and he hopes they never again have to suffer the economic and emotional losses of their homes being damaged by flooding.

Activity/Project Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographical Area:</th>
<th>Single County in a State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FEMA Region:</td>
<td>Region III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State:</td>
<td>West Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County:</td>
<td>Greenbrier County</td>
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<tr>
<td>City/Community:</td>
<td>Clearco; Rupert</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Key Activity/Project Information

- **Sector:** Public
- **Hazard Type:** Flooding
- **Activity/Project Type:** Acquisition/Buyouts
- **Structure Type:** Wood Frame
- **Activity/Project Start Date:** 01/2008
- **Activity/Project End Date:** Ongoing
- **Funding Source:** Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)
- **Funding Recipient:** State Government
- **Application/Project Number:** Dr-1696-0006

### Activity/Project Economic Analysis

- **Cost:** $105,000.00 (Actual)
- **Non FEMA Cost:** 26250

### Activity/Project Disaster Information

- **Mitigation Resulted From Federal Disaster?** No
- **Value Tested By Disaster?** Yes
- **Tested By Federal Disaster #:** No Federal Disaster specified
- **Year First Tested:** 2010
- **Repetitive Loss Property?** Yes

### Reference URLs

No URLs were submitted

### Main Points

No Main Points were entered.
survey open space created from buyout