



Two Tangier Island Homes Rise Above the Wrath of Hurricane Isabel

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Accomack County, Virginia

Tangier Island, VA - 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.

One of Crockett's neighbors is Betty Dise, whose home 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 as a result of Isabel to Tangier Island is estimated to be \$1,963,325. His 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."

2009 Follow-up:

Betty Dise related how her house was surrounded by 16 inches of flood water during the November 2009 Nor'easter and Tropical Depression Ida. Dise said, "Since Hurricane Isabel, my brother and others on the island have elevated their homes, and thankfully I've had no flooding in my home."

Activity/Project Location

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

FEMA Region: **Region III**

State: **Virginia**

County: **Accomack County**

City/Community: **Tangier**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Private**

Hazard Type: **Flooding; Hurricane/Tropical Storm**

Activity/Project Type: **Elevation, Structural**

Activity/Project Start Date: **09/1999**

Activity/Project End Date: **09/2002**

Funding Source: **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP); Local Sources**

Application/Project Number: **n/a**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **Amount Not Available**

Non FEMA Cost: **0**

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal
Disaster? **Unknown**

Value Tested By Disaster? **Yes**

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

Year First Tested: **2003**

Repetitive Loss Property? **Unknown**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: <http://www.floodsmart.gov/>

Reference URL 2: <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>

Main Points

- Help came from FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP).
- The HMGP funds paid to have the Crockett house's elevated three concrete block courses above ground level.
- After being chosen for the elevation project, Crockett contributed \$3,500, 5 percent of the total project cost.



Tangier Island house is higher and dryer



Another Tangier Island house is higher and dryer