



## Buyouts Prove to be the Best Option in Logan County

**Logan County, WV** - The community of Stollings is located in a remote area of Logan County in the southern West Virginia coalfields, one of the most rugged areas in the state. Heavily wooded hillsides are folded tightly together interspersed with narrow valleys with little space for the creek and the road at the bottom. Storms frequently cause severe flooding in these areas of Logan County, leaving many property owners no way to avoid their losses except for the Buyout option offered by FEMA through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP).

Anna Childress lived in her well kept two-story home for twenty-four years. Since she moved to Stollings in the early eighties, she and her neighbors had been flooded multiple times. Through all of the floods her flood insurance paid her damage claims. After the flash flood in 2004, the county determined several neighbors' homes to be substantially damaged. Many volunteered to participate in the Buyout option offered through the Grant Program. This State run program was coordinated with the homeowners, Logan County, State, and Federal officials.

In May of 2007 Anna was at home in a wheel chair recuperating with a broken hip when her house was flooded again. Judy Mullins, Project Officer with the Logan County Commission said, "the day of the flood, Annie sat on her porch and watched the water come over the creek banks, and just cried." This time her home was substantially damaged and she volunteered to take the Buyout offer and move to a safer place where she could finally enjoy some peace of mind.

The Logan County Commission favors property acquisition/demolition rather than elevating the structures, as removal is the only proven way to eliminate the problem of repetitive losses. As the acquisitions and demolitions are completed the vacant lots remain as green space and ponding areas to help reduce flooding downstream.

The private homeowners and businesses located in the flood prone areas are in the unenviable position of owning something of reduced value because their property suffers repeated flood damage. Flood insurance pays for repairs to the immediate damage, however, there is no way to compensate for the non-insured financial loss, stress, hardship, and constant cleanup required. The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Buyout option offers the only hope of avoiding these losses. The buyout/demolition plan is the only 100 percent effective solution to deed restrict future development and reduce flood damages in this flood prone area. With the residents now having relocated to a safer place, the cost savings of the Buyout continue to add up.

On March 15, 2012, intense thunderstorms poured six inches of rain in less than an hour, sending flash floods through residential and business areas causing widespread damage in areas of Logan County. All of the building sites acquired and demolished in the Stollings area were flooded in June of 2009, May 2010 and again this year on March 15, 2012. Thanks to the Buyout, there was no property damage and the open green space proved to help reduce flood damage downstream.