



Education Program for Flood Control System

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Los Angeles County, California



Los Angeles, CA - The dangers associated with the flood control system in the County of Los Angeles (LA), especially during periods of heavy rains, produces a substantial threat to the health and safety of our young people. The LA County Drainage Area system consists of over 470 miles of mainstream and tributary channels designed, built and maintained by the LA County Department of Public Works and the US Army Corp of Engineers. The flood channel system conveys, stores, or manages the storm runoff from the mountains, through and including the urban community, to the ocean. The channel's sizes vary from very narrow and shallow to over 600 feet wide and 30 feet deep. The velocity of the water runoff can range from 9 to 45 miles per hour and can exert tremendous forces capable of trapping victims against objects both underwater and at the surface.

On an annual average, six individuals drown in the flood channel system in the County of Los Angeles. The majority of these tragedies involve young people from 5 to 18 years old.

LA County and the LA County Office of Education embarked on a public education program through the school system directed to grade levels 4 – 12 and requiring parent participation. Their goal is to educate young children and the general public about the extreme danger and substantial threat to life that the flood channel system presents. The greatest potential to educate the highest number of people is the school system, potentially reaching 5 million people.

Educational materials include: (1) Booklet describing flood channel safety information. (2) Science lesson explaining forces of water and dangers around flood channels. (3) Videos depicting flood channel dangers and safety precautions.

The materials will be incorporated within the safety section of the health education and science education curriculum. It is important to tie the specific flood control system safety information to these broader curricular areas because they address the personal and social skills of decision-making needed to avoid all types of risks in daily living.

These collaborative efforts will contribute to a long-term solution to the historically repetitive problem of rescues and deaths related to flood control channels. If these measures are not implemented, the rate of deaths and rescues may increase due to the increase in population in the Los Angeles County area.

Activity/Project Location

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

FEMA Region: **Region IX**

State: **California**

County: **Los Angeles County**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Public**
Hazard Type: **Flooding**
Activity/Project Type: **Education/Outreach/Public Awareness**
Activity/Project Start Date: **10/1996**
Activity/Project End Date: **Ongoing**
Funding Source: **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP); Local Sources**
Funding Recipient: **Local Government**
Funding Recipient Name: **Los Angeles County Office of Education**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **\$77,000.00 (Estimated)**
Non FEMA Cost:

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal
Disaster? **No**
Value Tested By Disaster? **Unknown**
Repetitive Loss Property? **No**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: <http://www.floodsmart.gov/>
Reference URL 2: <http://www.oes.ca.gov/Operational/OESHome.nsf/1?OpenForm>

Main Points

- The dangers associated with the flood control system in the County of Los Angeles (LA), especially during periods of heavy rains, produces a substantial threat to the health and safety of individuals. The velocity of the water runoff can range from 9 to 45 miles per hour and can exert tremendous forces capable of trapping victims against objects both underwater and at the surface.
- LA County and the LA County Office of Education embarked on a public education program through the school system directed to grade levels 4 – 12 and requiring parent participation.
- The greatest potential to educate the highest number of people is the school system, potentially reaching 5 million people.
- Educational materials are incorporated in the safety section of the health and science education curriculum.
- These collaborative efforts will contribute to a long-term solution to the historically repetitive problem of rescues and deaths related to flood control channels.

