



Cassandro Wash Dam

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Maricopa County, Arizona



Wickenburg, AZ - North Wickenburg is home to close to 100 families that are in the middle to low-income group. These residences were in the floodway, Cassandro Wash, which was the oldest part of the city. The community experienced severe flooding many times. At one time, water was so deep in the streets that emergency vehicles could not pass through.

The City of Wickenburg pursued a Letter of Map Revision (LOMAR) thru the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). As a result, the city teamed with the Maricopa County Flood Control District to build the Cassandro Wash Dam. The dam was built to alleviate flooding of the homes on the Cassandro Wash and to allow future development of the property.

The Cassandro Wash Dam was the first dam where the Maricopa County Flood Control District was the owner; the district provided design, ownership and continued operation. Maintenance of the wash and dam is the responsibility of the flood control district.

Standard Homeowner's insurance policies do not cover flood damage. The National Flood Insurance Program makes Federally backed flood insurance available to homeowners, renters, and business owners in participating communities.

Shortly after completion of the construction of the dam, Wickenburg experienced a major storm event. The dam impound area filled to 20% capacity with minimal overflow to the street. The dam proved effective again during Hurricane Nora in 1997 and the severe storms of October 2000. No flooding problems occurred to North Wickenburg - the dam functioned as designed.

An immediate benefit was that the area, which was referred to as "blighted" has become livable. The roads that were constantly flooded have been paved which eliminated the daily dust control problems that comes with dirt roads. Also, construction of the dam removed the homes from a hundred year floodplain, decreasing the flood hazard and therefore the need for flood insurance.

Activity/Project Location

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

FEMA Region: **Region IX**

State: **Arizona**

County: **Maricopa County**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Public**
Hazard Type: **Flooding**
Activity/Project Type: **Flood Control**
Activity/Project Start Date: **03/1994**
Activity/Project End Date: **12/1996**
Funding Source: **Local Sources**
Funding Recipient: **Local Government**
Funding Recipient Name: **City of Wickenburg**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **\$5,000,000.00 (Actual)**
Non FEMA Cost:

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: **1997**
Repetitive Loss Property? **Unknown**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: <http://www.fema.gov/about/divisions/mitigation/mitigation.shtm>
Reference URL 2: <http://www.dem.state.az.us/>

Main Points

- partnership of City of Wickenburg, NFIP and Maricopa Co. Flood Control District to reduce flood risk to community
- Shortly after completion of the construction of the dam, Wickenburg experienced a major storm event. The dam impound area filled to 20% capacity with minimal overflow to the street.
- An immediate benefit was that the area, which was referred to as "blighted" has become livable.