



Bethany Beach Removable Access Ramp

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Sussex County, Delaware



Bethany Beach, DE - Major coastal storms, with approximately a six-year frequency, severely damaged the old permanently-installed handicapped beach access ramp. This presented danger from wind-borne and water-borne debris to the adjacent fixed structures as well as any passersby. It also entailed responses by emergency services personnel. Additionally, loss of the ramp resulted in the loss of beach privileges to many handicapped persons.

The local governing body of the Town of Bethany Beach applied to the State of Delaware for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds to construct a new removable ramp to allow for wheelchair access over the sand. Bethany Beach agreed to provide all of the non-Federal matching funds for the project.

Previously, replacement costs for the ramp averaged \$11,000 per storm event. Savings to Bethany Beach came in avoided damages to surrounding buildings and from not using emergency services. Dollar values saved are attached to the need to defend suits from handicapped persons denied access to the beach.

The new ramp consists of stationary 12-inch pilings and eight 12-foot removable ramp sections. Now, when severe storms are predicted, town personnel remove the ramp sections, preventing damage to nearby structures as well as visitors to the beach.

Activity/Project Location

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

FEMA Region: **Region III**

State: **Delaware**

County: **Sussex County**

City/Community: **Bethany Beach**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Public**

Hazard Type: **Coastal Storm**

Activity/Project Type: **Flood-proofing; Retrofitting, Structural**

Activity/Project Start Date: **04/1996**

Activity/Project End Date: **08/1996**

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

Funding Recipient: **Local Government**

Funding Recipient Name: **Town of Bethany Beach**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **\$25,672.00 (Actual)**

Non FEMA Cost:

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal
Disaster? **No**

Value Tested By Disaster? **No**

Repetitive Loss Property? **Unknown**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>

Reference URL 2: <http://www.state.de.us/dema/default.shtml>

Main Points

- The Town of Bethany Beach used HMGP funds to construct a new removable ramp to allow for wheelchair access over the sand.
- Bethany Beach agreed to provide all of the non-Federal matching funds for the project.
- When severe storms are predicted, town personnel remove the ramp sections, preventing damage to nearby structures as well as visitors to the beach.