



## Preparing for Floods

### Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

#### *Fairfield County, Connecticut*

**Westport, CT** - Located along the shores of Western Long Island Sound, 26 percent of the residents of the Town of Westport live within the 100-year floodplain. Taking an integrated approach to mitigation, Westport implemented several concurrent mitigation strategies.



In 1993, the Town applied for a grant from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection to elevate seven residential properties under the Hazard Grant Mitigation Program (HMGP). Other mitigation measures included the installation of 16 combination staff gauges/evacuation signs, and the printing of a disaster preparedness brochure (privately funded by one of the elevated homeowners) for Town residents.

In 1996, flooding struck again; however, damage to the seven elevated homes was completely prevented. Unfortunately flooding damaged several dozen other homes in Compo Beach that were not elevated. The success of the elevation project spurred other homeowners to seek elevation as a mitigation solution. As a result, 15 homeowners have received grants under HMGP and the Flood Mitigation Assistance Program to elevate their homes.

Westport has also amended its National Flood Insurance Program regulations such that any homeowners or businesses that construct additions or renovation to their buildings that exceed 50 percent of the fair market value of the building, must elevate the structure to one foot above the Base Flood Elevation.

The combined mitigation efforts of the Town of Westport are estimated at a benefit to cost ratio of three to one. As the first community in Connecticut to have an approved Hazard Mitigation Plan, Westport has served as a model for the communities of Milford and East Haven.

#### Activity/Project Location

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

FEMA Region: **Region I**

State: **Connecticut**

County: **Fairfield County**

City/Community: **Westport**

## Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Public**  
Hazard Type: **Flooding**  
Activity/Project Type: **Elevation, Structural; Education/Outreach/Public Awareness; Warning Systems**  
Activity/Project Start Date: **01/1993**  
Activity/Project End Date: **Ongoing**  
Funding Source: **Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA); Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP); Private funds; State sources**  
Funding Recipient: **Property Owner - Residential**

## Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **Amount Not Available**  
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: **1996**  
Repetitive Loss Property? **Unknown**

## Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: <http://www.floodsmart.gov>  
Reference URL 2: <http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/hmgp/index.shtm>

## Main Points

- In 1993, the Town applied for a grant from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection to elevate seven residential properties under the Housing Grant Mitigation Program (HMGP).
- In 1996, flooding struck again; however, damage to the seven elevated homes was completely prevented.
- The combined mitigation efforts of the Town of Westport are estimated at a benefit to cost ratio of three to one.