



Stream Bank Repair Measure Protects Sewer Line

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Broome County, New York

Albany, NY – Repairs of a section of a stream bank in the Town of Vestal, damaged by Tropical Depression Ivan last fall, included special measures that have proven to be successful in protecting an adjacent sewer line.



Heavy rainfall during Tropical Depression Ivan washed out a section of the bank along Choconut Creek near a town sewer main, an area described by County Office of Emergency Services Director Michael Aswad as “a continual flash-flooding problem in that part of the county.”

In addition to restoration of the stream bank, the repair project was expanded to provide protection to the sewer line as part of a state-federal program to support mitigation measures that help prevent damage to infrastructure in future disasters.

At the request of Governor George E. Pataki, President Bush declared Broome County part of the major disaster area as a result of the tropical depression.

Among the recovery programs activated by the declaration was the Public Assistance Program. This program reimburses eligible government jurisdictions and certain non profits for costs for debris removal, emergency protective measures and the repair or restoration of damaged public infrastructure.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides 75 percent of the grant funding. The 25 percent non-federal share is made up from state and local funding. The New York State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) administers the program.

In most cases, Public Assistance repair and restoration funding brings the damaged infrastructure back to pre-disaster conditions.

However, a major FEMA and SEMO policy goal is to mitigate, where it is cost effective, when restoring damaged infrastructure so the repaired facility is better able to withstand future disaster damages. A little extra money spent now may save untold funds later.

Together with restoring the stream bank to its pre-disaster condition, the Choconut Creek project also involved installation of filter fabric and large stone rip rap to protect the sewer line from erosion. The special mitigation work amounted to about \$3,400 of the total \$42,000 project cost, with the federal share at about \$32,000.

“It’s working well,” Town Engineer Gary Campo said of the project. “The rock’s in great shape. We’ve gone through several storms (including the April storms that prompted the current disaster declaration that covers Broome County) without problems.”

He said several additional projects related to Tropical Depression Ivan are in the works for Choconut Creek, most of them to protect utility lines.

“Mitigation activities such as these are a smart way of doing business by expending monies now to lessen the threat on communities before an event occurs in the future,” said James W. Tuffey, Director of the State Emergency Management Office.

“This is a good example of a modest expense today to avoid potentially significant problems and costs in the future,” said FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer Marianne C. Jackson.

FEMA prepares the nation for all hazards and manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates mitigation activities, trains first responders, works with state and local emergency managers, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration.

Activity/Project Location

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

FEMA Region: **Region II**

State: **New York**

County: **Broome County**

City/Community: **Vestal**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Public**

Hazard Type: **Flooding**

Activity/Project Type: **Flood Control**

Structure Type: **Concrete, Reinforced**

Activity/Project Start Date: **10/2004**

Activity/Project End Date: **12/2004**

Funding Source: **Other FEMA funds/ US Department of Homeland Security**

Funding Recipient: **Local Government**

Funding Recipient Name: **Town of Vestal**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **\$42,000.00 (Actual)**

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal
Disaster? **Yes**

Federal Disaster #: **1565 , 10/01/2004**

Value Tested By Disaster? **Yes**

Tested By Federal Disaster #: **No Federal Disaster specified**

Year First Tested: **2005**

Repetitive Loss Property? **Yes**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: <http://www.floodsmart.gov/>

Reference URL 2: <http://www.semo.state.ny.us/index.cfm>

Main Points

- Repairs of a section of a stream bank in the Town of Vestal, damaged by Tropical Depression Ivan last fall, included special measures that have proven to be successful in protecting an adjacent sewer line.
- Heavy rainfall during Tropical Depression Ivan washed out a section of the bank along Choconut Creek near a town sewer main, an area described by County Office of Emergency Services Director Michael Aswad as “a continual flash-flooding problem in that part of the county.”
- Together with restoring the stream bank to its pre-disaster condition, the Choconut Creek project also involved installation of filter fabric and large stone rip rap to protect the sewer line from erosion. The special mitigation work amounted to about \$3,400 of the total \$42,000 project cost, with the federal share at about \$32,000.