



## Sportsman's Paradise

### Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

#### *Berkeley County, West Virginia*

**Berkley County, WV:** Sportsman's Paradise was initially a place for weekend visits and summer vacations. Approximately 10 years ago it became a year-round community. It is located in one of the lowest lying areas of the State, with some properties having an elevation of 21 feet below the base flood elevation.



The January 1996 flood event was caused by snowmelt from a 3 foot blizzard and rain from a 100-year storm. As a result, FEMA provided assistance to the State of West Virginia by identifying mitigation opportunities in the State. This aided the State in developing applications for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funded projects. The funding for the project was a combination of HMGP and State monies.

Berkley County, a State leader in the adoption of regulatory codes to protect the lives and property of its residents, has floodplain ordinances, which require all substantially damaged properties to be elevated when rebuilt. For many residents this requirement was both financially and physically problematic.

Initially, letters were sent to all property owners in Sportsmen's Paradise inviting them to participate in the voluntary program, some chose not to at that time. September 1996 brought severe flooding to the area again. Following that incident, the number of participating owners rose to 32: that's 50 percent of the owners in the community.

This project provided the opportunity to get 32 structures out of the floodplain and therefore reduce the level of flooding in the area. Permanently removing these properties from the floodplain eliminated the need for future Federal disaster relief or National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) payments in this area. Additionally, large quantities of debris (including junk cars, boats and car parts), representing potential implements of destruction during a flood, were removed.

The benefits to the residents in reduced human suffering, both physically and mentally, are immeasurable. Dollar values for avoided expenditures for emergency services personnel and equipment must also be counted as benefits. Transforming the land to open space will provide all residents with increased opportunities for recreation and additional recharge areas for future flood events.

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.

#### Activity/Project Location

Geographical Area: **Single County (County-wide)**

FEMA Region: **Region III**

State: **West Virginia**

County: **Berkeley County**

### Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Public**  
Hazard Type: **Flooding**  
Activity/Project Type: **Acquisition/Buyouts**  
Structure Type: **Wood Frame**  
Activity/Project Start Date: **10/1998**  
Activity/Project End Date: **Ongoing**  
Funding Source: **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP); Local Sources**  
Funding Recipient: **Local Government**  
Funding Recipient Name: **Berkley County Commission**

### Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **\$636,957.00 (Actual)**

### Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal  
Disaster? **Yes**  
Federal Disaster #: **1096 , 01/25/1996**  
Value Tested By Disaster? **No**  
Repetitive Loss Property? **Unknown**

### Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: <http://www.fema.gov/business/nfip/>  
Reference URL 2: <http://www.wvs.state.wv.us/wvoes/>

### Main Points

- The January 1996 flood event was caused by snowmelt from a 3 foot blizzard and rain from a 100-year storm. As a result, FEMA provided assistance to the State of West Virginia by identifying mitigation opportunities in the State.
- September 1996 brought severe flooding to the area again. Following that incident, the number of participating owners rose to 32: that's 50 percent of the owners in the community.
- The benefits to the residents in reduced human suffering, both physically and mentally, are immeasurable.