

# Borough of Atlantic Highlands

## 2013 Hazardous Mitigation Plan Update

Natural hazards have the potential to cause property loss, loss of life, economic hardship, and threats to public health and safety. While an important aspect of emergency management deals with disaster recovery (the actions that a community takes to repair damages), an equally important aspect of emergency management involves **hazard mitigation** - sustained actions taken to reduce long-term risk to life and property. They are things we do today to be more protected in the future. For example, elevating buildings in flood hazard areas, installing hurricane clips and storm shutters, relocating critical facilities out of hazard areas, using fire-resistant construction materials in wildfire hazard areas, etc. Hazard mitigation actions are essential to breaking the typical disaster cycle of damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage. With careful selection, they can be long-term, cost-effective means of reducing risk and helping to create a more sustainable and disaster-resilient community.

A **hazard mitigation plan** describes an area's vulnerability to the various natural hazards that are typically present, along with an array of actions and projects for reducing key risks. This project list is known as a "mitigation strategy." While natural disasters cannot be prevented from occurring, the continued implementation of mitigation strategies identified in the plan will gradually, but steadily, make our communities more sustainable and disaster-resilient.

The **Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan for Monmouth County** was prepared between 2007 and 2009 to meet the requirements of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000), which requires all states and local governments to have a hazard mitigation plan in order to be eligible to apply for certain types of federal hazard mitigation project grants. FEMA grant monies were received to cover the costs of the plan's development. Monmouth County used a 'multi-jurisdictional' approach, inviting all of the municipalities within the County to participate in the plan. At that time, 52 of the County's 53 jurisdictions opted to participate. This opened the door for the County and each of its 52 participating jurisdictions to apply to FEMA for hazard mitigation project funding, including monies which became available under recent Federal disaster declarations for Hurricane Irene and the remnants of Tropical Storm Lee in 2011, and Superstorm Sandy in 2012. All plan participants have been working since the plan was initially approved by FEMA in 2009 to complete the projects that were listed in their mitigation strategies.

Hazard mitigation plans must be: (a) implemented on an ongoing basis, and (b) updated every five years to ensure that they remain applicable representations of local risk and locally-preferred risk reduction strategies. Monmouth County and its jurisdictions initiated the first formal **plan update** last summer; the process is ongoing. The updated plan is expected to be reapproved by FEMA and adopted by all communities in 2014. The County has once again obtained FEMA grant funding to cover the cost of the plan update, and has opted to continue its 'multi-jurisdictional' approach. This time, all 53 municipalities in the County are participating. Each jurisdiction is attending meetings, providing feedback in a series of topic areas, reaching out to the public and other key stakeholders in the community, and developing an updated mitigation strategy. Successful participation in the plan update process is required to maintain eligibility to apply for mitigation project grants.

For questions or other feedback, or to find out how you can become involved, please contact Atlantic Highlands Emergency Management Coordinator, Adam Hubeny 732-291-1444; e-mail [ahubeny@ahnj.com](mailto:ahubeny@ahnj.com). At the County level, please feel free to reach out to Michael E. Oppegaard, Coordinator, Monmouth County Sheriff's Office, Emergency Management Division (phone: 732-431-7400; e-mail: [moppegaard@mcsnj.org](mailto:moppegaard@mcsnj.org)) or his Deputy Coordinator, Margaret Murnane-Brooks (phone: 732-431-7400; e-mail: [mmurnane@mcsnj.org](mailto:mmurnane@mcsnj.org)). More information about the project is maintained on the County Sheriff's Office web site at: [www.mcsnj.org/Sections-read-144.html](http://www.mcsnj.org/Sections-read-144.html)