

FEMA Programs in Ouachita Parish

Quick Facts

FEMA: Federal Emergency Management Agency- Federal agency that provides grants to state and local governments for disaster recovery and hazard mitigation.

LOEP: Louisiana Office of Emergency Preparedness- State agency responsible for administering grants from FEMA in the state.

NFIP: National Flood Insurance Program- Federal program that provides flood insurance in exchange for the adoption of a minimum local floodplain management ordinance.

FMA: Flood Mitigation Assistance- Federal grant program that provides financial assistance to communities for flood hazard mitigation measures.

HMGP: Hazard Mitigation Grant Program- Federal grant program that provides financial assistance for flood hazard mitigation measures to communities included in a presidential disaster declaration.

Project Impact: An initiative of FEMA that helps communities protect themselves from the devastating effects of natural disasters by taking actions that dramatically reduce disruption and loss.

HMP: Hazard Mitigation Plan- A community plan that evaluates hazards and explains the strategy to mitigate those hazards.

Flooding in Ouachita Parish

Problem

Ouachita Parish is divided by the Ouachita River, which originates as a tiny mountain stream in the Ouachita Mountains of central Arkansas. The river spans approximately 600 miles and drains more than 15,000 square miles of land. Ouachita Parish covers 611 square miles, so about 96% of the water in the Ouachita River falls as precipitation outside Ouachita Parish. Approximately 2,700 square miles of land is drained by tributaries that enter the Ouachita River within Ouachita Parish. The convergence of these large drainage basins sets the stage for flooding in the Parish.

Losses

Flood losses as of September 30, 1999 in Ouachita Parish, based on data from the Flood Insurance Administration of FEMA, show that since 1978, when record keeping began, Ouachita Parish has experienced over \$40 million in flood claims. The data also show that of the 5,296 properties currently covered by flood insurance in the Parish, there have been 3,621 losses. Currently, there

are over 400 insured properties in the Parish and incorporated areas that have suffered multiple losses. The table at the bottom of the page summarizes this data.

Solutions

Currently, the Ouachita Parish Police Jury is implementing five different FEMA programs in the Parish aimed at reducing the impact of flooding. These programs are:

- Flood Mitigation Assistance - Phase I Buyout
- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program – Buyout and Elevation Project
- Project Impact
- Hazard Mitigation Planning
- Community Rating System

This publication summarizes the implementation of these five programs.

Flood Insurance Statistics for Ouachita Parish

City	Total Premiums \$ Paid Annually	Current # of Policies	Coverage	# of Flood Losses	Dollars Paid Historically
Monroe	\$1,333,033	3520	\$325,322,000	2281	\$21,298,261
Ouachita Parish	\$526,863	1450	\$119,346,000	869	\$11,111,058
West Monroe	\$119,072	322	\$23,204,000	471	\$7,726,661
Sterlington	\$613	3	\$311,000	0	\$0
Richwood	\$171	1	\$62,000	N.A.	N.A.
TOTALS	\$1,979,752	5296	\$468,245,000	3621	\$40,135,980

FMA / Phase I Buyout Program

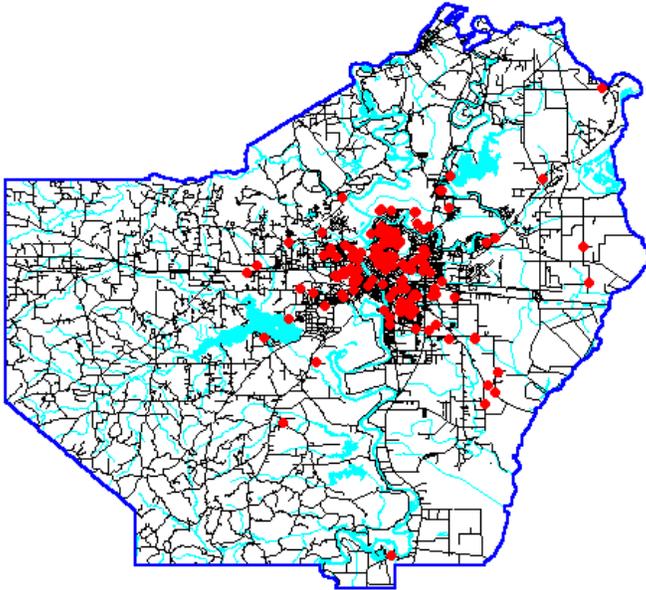


Mike and Ann Sadler accept a check from the Ouachita Parish Police Jury for the purchase of their home. This money was made available through FEMA's FMA program. The Sadler's home was one of 20 flood-prone structures in Monroe, West Monroe and the Parish purchased by the Police Jury under this program. Presenting from left to right are: Tom Malmay, Ouachita Emergency Management; Woodson McGuffee, Asst. Parish Administrator; Tom Holtzclaw, Police Jury President, and, behind him, David Passey of FEMA Region VI.



Part of the 25% matching funds requirement for the FMA grant was met by in-kind services from the Ouachita Parish Public Works Department. After the Sadler's removed their furnishings and salvaged all desirable fixtures from the house, the structure was demolished and hauled to the local landfill. The property will now remain vacant-effectively reclaimed by the floodplain.

HMGP/Unmet Needs Buyout and Elevation Project



Ouachita Parish and its communities have over 400 properties with 2 or more insured losses from flooding. These properties, depicted with large dots to indicate the approximate location, provide justification for focusing Federal, State and local government efforts on this area.

This editorial, appearing in the News-Star on March 11, 2000, praised the approach taken toward flooding by Ouachita Parish Officials. Local TV and newspaper coverage has been a significant help in improving public awareness and participation in the FEMA programs.

Buying homes makes sense, environmental and financial

■ There are many reasons for buying this kind of flood-prone land. And Ouachita Parish Officials are in the lead for chasing down this money.

Another spring is here. Unfortunately although there is some chance of rain this weekend-experts say northeastern Louisiana should expect another dry year.

Let's hope it's better than the last couple of years. In June 1999, trees were leaning toward people when they walked outside.

The normal amount of rainfall in this area through March 31 is more than 14.5 inches. So far this year? Less than 3.5 inches.

But this is still Louisiana.

That's why it's nice to see the Ouachita Parish Police Jury at work buying homes in flood-prone areas. It shows that officials are looking ahead. The federal government has a program through the Federal Emergency Management Agency to buy homes that continually flood. The money is useful for at least three reasons: 1)homeowners in those areas have a hard time selling their property for anything close to fair value because of past flooding; 2)if the property has flood insurance, the government has to bail out the owners every few years after a flood anyway; 3) nothing else can be built on the land after it's bought, thereby turning it back to much-needed wetlands.

And ownership of the land goes to local government jurisdiction.

That brings us back to local officials.

OUR VIEW

It's one thing to push this kind of program when water is lapping at the top of levees. It's another in the middle of a drought when more people are worrying about how to water their tomato garden than any flood problems in the distant future.

On top of that, Ouachita Parish seems to be leaps and bounds in front in the chase for this kind of money.

Of the \$6.1 million available statewide to purchase flood-prone homes, Ouachita parish has received \$5.3 million.

"FEMA's goal is to purchase the 350 houses here that flood and this money will go a long way toward that goal," said District E Juror Tommy McJunkins.

The parish's assistant administrator, Woodson McGuffee, said FEMA gets this money from other agencies that don't use allotted budgets.

"Most folks didn't bother to apply for these funds because what government agency doesn't use all their funds?" he said. "We took a chance and it paid off."

It certainly did.

For the environment.

For landowners of flood-prone property.

And for other landowners who are affected downstream because swampland never meant to be used for anything other than housing Mother Nature was paved over.

Ouachita Parish officials should be commended for their work in this area.

This is government when it's working right.

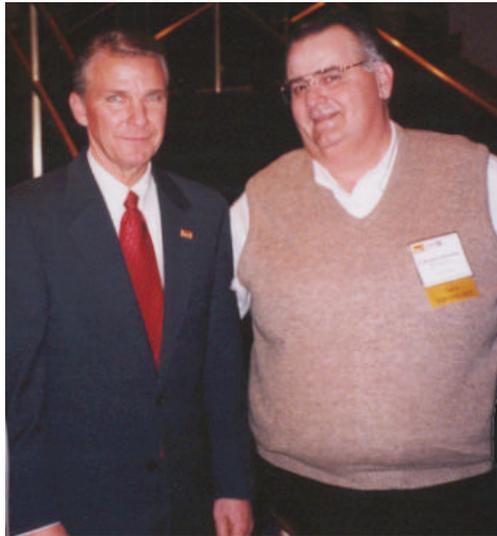
Project Impact



In December, 1999 Ouachita Parish was named the Class of 2000 Project Impact community for Louisiana. A workshop for community leaders, shown here, was held in January to build support and establish direction for improving the disaster-resistance of the community.

Summary of Tasks for Project Impact

- I. **Initial Startup Activities and Planning.**
 - Attend the Project Impact Summits (1999 and 2000)
 - Appoint a Project Impact Coordinator
 - Conduct Project Impact Workshop
 - Establish and Coordinate with a Project Impact Process Action Team / Steering Committee
 - Coordination with Other State and Federal Agencies
- II. **Develop Long -Term Partnerships with Local Business and Industry.**
 - Prepare a Project Impact Presentation for Partnering
 - Schedule and Attend up to 8 Meetings with Prospective Partners
 - Hold a Partner Appreciation Ceremony
- III. **Develop and Implement a Public Education Network.**
 - Assess and Address the Educational needs for Public Officials, Local Business, and Private Citizens
 - Coordinate with Local Media to Increase Public Awareness of Disaster Resistant Initiatives
 - Prepare and Maintain a Project Impact Website
 - Flood Insurance and Floodplain Management Training
 - Coordinate Home Depot "How To" Classes
- IV. **Define, Prioritize, and Implement Hazard Mitigation Projects to Prevent Future Damages and Protect Existing Structures.**
 - Develop a Comprehensive Drainage and Flood Control Plan
 - Request a New Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM)
 - Continued use of Non-Structural Alternatives to Solve Flooding Problems
 - Strengthen and Continue to Enforce Building Codes
 - Develop Base Map of Parish
 - Conduct Elevation Certificate Training
 - Conduct CRS Activities
 - Conduct Floodproofing Demonstration Project



Community Leaders, including most of the Parish Police Jury and staff, such as Woodson McGuffee (r), traveled to the Project Impact Summit Conference in Washington D.C. Mr. McGuffee is shown here with the Director of FEMA, James Lee Witt. Director Witt is the visionary behind Project Impact.

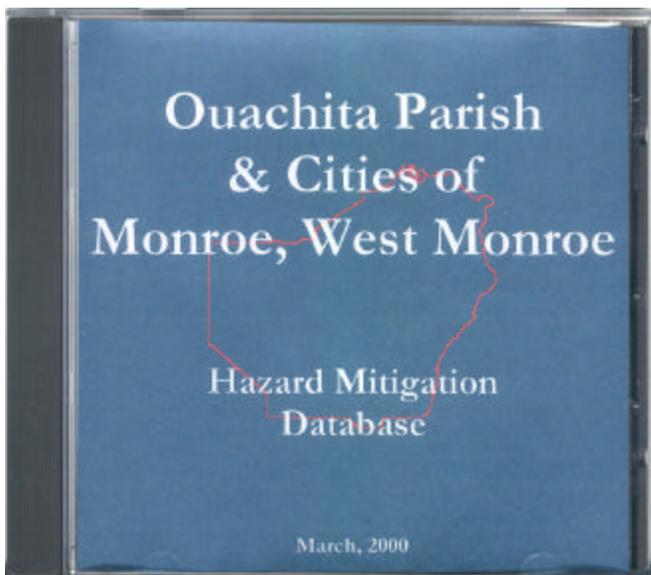


A Project Impact Signing Ceremony was held at the Courthouse in March, 2000. Tom Holtzclaw, Police Jury President, addressed a large audience of community and government leaders. Also speaking were Colonel Michael Brown, Louisiana Office of Emergency Preparedness; Mayor Dave Norris of West Monroe; Shari Brand of FEMA Region VI; and Lawson Swearingin, President of University of Louisiana at Monroe. At the ceremony over 75 Project Impact Partners including the Chamber of Commerce, Entergy, Riverwood International, Guide Corporation and Koch Industries signed a Memorandum of Agreement supporting the building of a Disaster Resistant Community.

Hazard Mitigation Plan

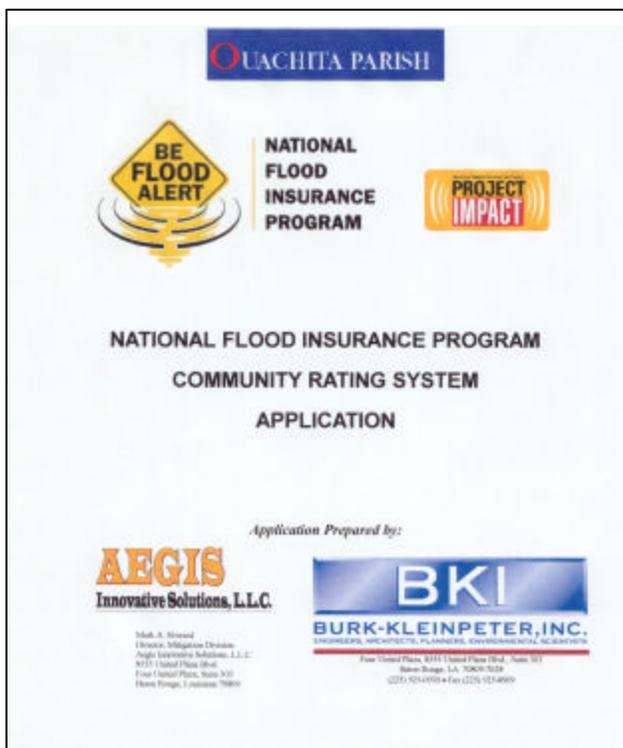
Name	Affiliation
George Cannon	Monroe City School Board
David Creed	North Delta Planning and Development
Sue Edmunds	West Monroe West Ouachita Chamber of Commerce
Bruce Fleming	City of West Monroe
Don Harrison	Harrison & Associates
Jerry Madden	S.E. Huey Company
Tom Malmay	Ouachita Civil Defense Agency
John Maroney	Maroney Engineers
David Martin	American Red Cross Volunteer
Jim Morgan	Group One Realty
Mark Pilcher	State Farm Insurance Agency, Flood Department
Asa Ray	City of Monroe
Brian Smith	Entergy Corporation
Rodney Smith	Ouachita Parish Police Jury
Gene Tarver	City of Monroe

With the input and direction of the Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee identified above, an area-wide plan for addressing natural and technological hazards was completed in March. This blueprint for action provides specific steps for improving disaster resistance. Copies are available for all citizens, organizations and agencies. This plan was presented in a Public Meeting and approved by the Parish Police Jury.



Community Rating System

The three goals of the Ouachita Parish Community Rating System (CRS) program are **to reduce flood losses, facilitate accurate insurance ratings, and promote the awareness of flood insurance.** The CRS is modeled after the National Fire Rating System in order to reward communities who develop and maintain exemplary practices that exceed the minimum floodplain management requirements. Communities are ranked on the 10 to 1 scale, 10 being no discount and 1 being a 50% discount towards flood insurance premiums. There are nearly 900 communities nationwide receiving flood insurance premium discounts based on their emphasis on flood hazard mitigation. Joining CRS is yet another way that the Police Jury is striving to increase the Parish's disaster resistance while also helping to save local residents money on their flood insurance premiums.



CRS in Ouachita Parish:

- 33,812 structures included in program
- 19% of the 241 square miles of Special Flood Hazard Area in the Parish is considered open space which means no structures are present. Rewards will be given for increasing regulatory standards that promote turning more flood-prone land into open space.
- Class 9 CRS rating is expected which will mean a 5% reduction in flood insurance premiums for homeowners in the parish.

Pictured above and to the left is the CRS application that will be submitted to FEMA upon its completion. The application will describe in detail how Ouachita Parish is achieving the goals of the Community Rating System.

**Disaster
Planning/
Mitigation**

- Hazard Assessments
- Vulnerability Analysis
- Risk Management Plans
- Repetitive Loss Reduction Planning
- Community Rating System(CRS) Applications and Assistance

**Disaster
Education/
Communication**

- Public Education
- Public Meeting Facilitation
- Media Coordination
- Flood Insurance Training for Realtors, Lenders and Insurance Agents

**FEMA
Grant
Assistance**

- Grant Applications
- Grant Implementation
- Project Management
- Damage Survey Reports/Project Worksheets Management

**To learn more about how you can become
disaster resilient contact:**



Four United Plaza, 8555 United Plaza Blvd., Suite 303
Baton Rouge, LA 70809-7028
(225) 925-0930 • Fax (225) 925-8909
Jeff Heaton
jheaton@bkiusa.com



Four United Plaza, 8555 United Plaza Blvd., Suite 303
Baton Rouge, LA 70809-7028
(225) 922-4440 • Fax (225) 922-4443
Mark Howard
Director -Mitigation Division
aegissolutions@aol.com

This document prepared for Ouachita Parish by BKI & AEGIS.