

SECTION 8: PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

BACKGROUND

Section 201.6.a(4) of Chapter 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations (44CFR) states: “Multi-jurisdictional plans (e.g. watershed plans) may be accepted, as appropriate, as long as each jurisdiction has participated in the process and has officially adopted the plan.” The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and New York State Emergency Management Office (NYSEMO) both encourage multi-jurisdictional planning. Therefore, in the preparation of the Greene County Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP), a Planning Partnership was formed to pursue grant funding for the plan and to meet requirements of the federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA) for as many eligible local governments in Greene County as possible.

The DMA defines a local government as follows: “Any county, municipality, city, town, township, public authority, school district, special district, intrastate district, council of governments (regardless of whether the council of governments is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under State law), regional or interstate government entity, or agency or instrumentality of a local government; any Indian tribe or authorized tribal organization, or Alaska Native village or organization; and any rural community, unincorporated town or village, or other public entity.”

THE PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

INITIAL SOLICITATION AND LETTERS OF INTENT

Greene County solicited the participation of all local governments in the County at the commencement of this project. Local governments interested signed a “Letter of Intent” and/or a resolution committing their participation and resources to the development of the Greene County Multi-Jurisdictional Multi-Hazards Mitigation Plan. Greene County, all municipal jurisdictions, and two special purpose districts are participating in the Plan. One special purpose district, the Association of Property Owners of Sleepy Hollow Lake, Inc. is a plan participant, while the other, Batavia Kill Water District, is participating by proxy to Greene County and has included its mitigation actions in the County annex (Table 8-1).

Table 8-1. Participating Jurisdictions in Greene County

Jurisdictions		
Town of Ashland	Town of Hunter	Village of Coxsackie
Town of Athens	Town of Jewett	Village of Hunter
Town of Cairo	Town of Lexington	Village of Tannersville
Town of Catskill	Town of New Baltimore	Assoc. of Property Owners of Sleepy Hollow Lake, Inc.
Town of Coxsackie	Town of Prattsville	
Town of Durham	Town of Windham	
Town of Greenville	Village of Athens	
Town of Halcott	Village of Catskill	

PLANNING PARTNER EXPECTATIONS

The Planning Committee agreed to the following list of expectations:

- Establish Plan development goals;
- Establish a timeline for completion of the Plan;
- Ensure that the Plan meets the requirements of DMA 2000 and FEMA and SEMO guidance;
- Solicit and encourage the participation of regional agencies, a range of stakeholders, and citizens in the Plan development process;
- Assist in gathering information for inclusion in the Plan, including the use of previously developed reports and data;
- Organize and oversee the public involvement process;
- Develop, revise, adopt, and maintain Volume I of the Plan in its entirety and the local jurisdictional annex in Volume II.

JURISDICTION ANNEX TEMPLATES

Jurisdictional annex templates were created to help the Planning Committee prepare their jurisdiction-specific annexes and ensure all criteria of Section 201.6 of 44CFR would be met, based on the partners' capabilities and mode of operation. The template and detailed instructions were designed to lead each partner through a series of steps that would generate the DMA-required elements that are specific for each partner. The designated point-of-contact for each participating jurisdiction, as well as the County, was asked to complete the template using the detailed instructions, guidance from the consultant and technical assistance provided at the jurisdictional annex workshop (discussed below). The templates and their instructions can be found in Appendix F.

WORKSHOP

A jurisdictional annex workshop was held on Tuesday, January 6, 2009 for the Mitigation Planning Committee. Attendance at this workshop was considered mandatory for plan participants. At the workshop, an overview was provided for each section in the annex. The workshop was designed to be instructional, but also allow for open discussion and questions. In addition, personalized technical assistance was available and provided to each jurisdiction, if needed. Topics discussed during this session included:

- DMA 2000 overview
- Jurisdictional Annex Templates Tools
- Jurisdictional Annex Template
 - Overview
 - Risk ranking
 - Cost/benefit review

The Planning Committee was led through an exercise to rank risk for the County as a whole. This was a collaborative effort by all workshop attendees. Concurrently, each committee member was asked to rank each risk specifically for its jurisdiction, based on probability of occurrence and estimates of potential dollar losses to structures vulnerable to the hazard. Maps illustrating hazard areas and tables estimating

exposure and losses were provided to each jurisdiction as a tool, in addition to the risk assessment, to complete this exercise.

A separate, follow-up teleconference Annex Workshop was held for the jurisdictions that did not attend the formal workshop meeting.

BENEFIT/COST REVIEW

Each jurisdiction's annex includes an action plan of prioritized initiatives to mitigate natural hazards. Section 201.6.c.3iii of 44CFR requires the prioritization of the action plan to emphasize the extent to which benefits are maximized according to a cost/benefit review of the proposed projects and their associated costs. As part of jurisdiction annex template completion, the Planning Committee was asked to weigh the estimated benefits of a project versus the estimated costs to establish a parameter to be used in the prioritization of a project. This benefit/cost review was qualitative; that is, it did not include the level of detail required by FEMA for project grant eligibility under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grant program. This qualitative approach was used because projects may not be implemented for up to 10 years, and the associated costs and benefits could change dramatically in that time. Each project was assessed by assigning subjective ratings (high, medium, and low) to its costs and benefits, as follows:

Table 8-2. Benefit/Cost Review

Costs	
High	Existing funding levels are not adequate to cover the costs of the proposed project, and implementation would require an increase in revenue through an alternative source (e.g., bonds, grants, and fee increases).
Medium	The project could be implemented with existing funding but would require a re-apportionment of the budget or a budget amendment, or the cost of the project would have to be spread over multiple years.
Low	The project could be funded under the existing budget. The project is part of or can be part of an existing, ongoing program.
Benefits	
High	Project will have an immediate impact on the reduction of risk exposure to life and property.
Medium	Project will have a long-term impact on the reduction of risk exposure to life and property or will provide an immediate reduction in the risk exposure to property.
Low	Long-term benefits of the project are difficult to quantify in the short term.

Using this approach, projects with positive benefit versus cost ratios (such as high over high, high over medium, medium over low, etc.) are considered cost-beneficial and are prioritized accordingly. For many of the initiatives identified in the action plans, participating jurisdictions may seek financial assistance under FEMA's HMGP or PDM programs. Both of these programs require detailed benefit/cost analysis as part of the application process. These analyses will be performed when funding applications are prepared, using the FEMA model process. The Planning Committee is committed to implementing mitigation strategies with benefits that exceed costs. For projects not seeking financial assistance from grant programs that require this sort of analysis, the Planning Committee reserves the right to define "benefits" according to parameters that meet its needs and the goals and objectives of this plan.

COMPLETION OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

All participating towns and villages in the County completed the planning and annex-preparation process. Completed jurisdictional annexes are presented in Section 9. Any non-participating local government

within the Greene County planning area can “dock” to this plan in the future by following the linkage procedures defined in Appendix H.