



TWO RIVERS-OTTAUQUECHEE

3117 Rose Hill
The King Farm
Woodstock, VT 05091

REGIONAL COMMISSION

www.trorc.org
802.457.3188, fax: 802.457.4728

MEMO

Date: October 18, 2011

To: Selectboard Chairs, Town Managers, Administrative Assistants

From: Kevin Geiger, Senior Planner

Re: Property buyouts and other mitigation measures

No one likes to see disaster damage, and people really don't like to repeat the same damage.

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) grants are meant to address an issue at a site so that it does not get damaged in the next disaster. HMGP funds are created every time Vermont has a disaster. The grants are reviewed at the state level. Projects that lessen flood related damages, and do so in a manner that leaves waterways in as natural a state with as much room as possible, are the most likely to succeed.

This grant program may be the best source of funding to address serious losses suffered by homeowners, but homeowners can't apply directly, only towns or non-profits. It is also a route to upgrade culverts and drainage that are unable to be upgraded during disaster recovery. However, always seek to have any road infrastructure upgraded if possible *during the disaster recovery*, as this method does not require an application, is not competitive, and lessens the demands on the limited pool of HMGP funds. HMGP grants can also be used for a variety of other projects that reduce damage.

For home buyouts, total project costs include, but are not limited to:

- buying out the property at its assessed value;
- legal costs for title search and deed restrictions;
- demolition, removal and disposal of structures/wells/septic tanks;
- permitting and grant management; and
- site stabilization such as bank repair, regrading and seeding.

HMGP grants require a 25% non-federal match. This can be town or private sources of cash, but may also be donated services, materials or other in-kind match. Towns may wish to assist landowners needing buyouts by supplying equipment for demolition or site work. Contractors may also donate services. However, the match must be supplied during the grant period. Therefore, people hoping for grants should wait if possible until a grant is awarded before undertaking any actions they want counted as match.

All HMGP projects must also pass a cost benefit test. Simply put, a grant should cost no more to fix the problem than it would cost to keep repairing it. You can't get a grant for \$200,000 to buy out a house that only has had \$50,000 in damage from a 1% chance flood. For homes that have suffered "substantial damage" (more than 50% of the value), a cost benefit is not needed.

TRORC can help towns fill out the forms and apply, but towns should be contacting property owners now that they think might qualify and be interested in participating. Attached is a form interested owners need to file with the town. Also attached is a basic format for a Letter of Intent that towns should fill out and send in to Vermont Emergency Management prior to the full application. **A Letter of Intent is due December 30, 2011.**

A workshop on HMGP will be held at the US Army Reserve Center in White River Junction on Thursday, October 27 from 9:30-11 AM. The Center is so new it is difficult to find directions. It is set way back from US 5 on the left about 2 miles south of the Aquatic Center, just after Northern Nurseries.

Please send me a copy of any Letter of Intent you send, and feel free to contact me for more information.

(SAMPLE, put on town letterhead)

LETTER OF INTENT (LOI)

Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs- FY 2012

From: (town, agency, organization, or non-profit entity)

Point of Contact: (name, address, phone, fax, and e-mail)

Please Return To: Ray Doherty, State Hazard Mitigation Officer
Vermont Emergency Management
103 South Main Street
Waterbury, VT 05671
Tel (802) 241-5258
Fax (802) 241-5556
rdoherty@dps.state.vt.us

Brief Description of Mitigation Project or Planning Application:

Total project cost: \$

Please note: Applicants are responsible for the 25% local match requirement

Help Needed to Complete Application and/or Benefit-Cost Analysis?

Yes

No

(Sample, put on town letterhead)

Notice of Voluntary Interest

Town of _____

Floodprone Property Acquisition Project Homeowner Interest Sign-up Sheet and Voluntary Notice

Please complete this form if you are interested in exploring further your options for reducing your flood losses, and return to the town offices by November 21, 2011.

Signing this does not commit you or the town to any action.

Property E911Address: _____

Owner(s) Mailing Address: _____

Owner(s) Name(s): _____

Contact Phone Number: _____ - _____ - _____

Email: _____ @ _____

The Town of _____ is required by FEMA to inform you that your participation in this project for open-space acquisition is *voluntary*. Neither the State of Vermont nor the Town of _____ will use its eminent domain authority to acquire the property for open-space purposes if you choose not to participate, or if negotiations fail.

_____/_____/_____

Owner's Signature

Date