

Growth Management Department

Land Development Division
Chandra Frederick, AICP, Director



Board of County Commissioners

330 W. Church St.
P.O. Box 9005, Drawer GM03
Bartow, FL 33831-9005
(863)534-6792
SUNCOM 569-6792
Fax 863-534-6407

**Polk County
Floodplain Management Annual Progress Report
September 2009**

The Polk County Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) serves as the County's Floodplain Management Plan under the Community Rating System (CRS). Under CRS Activity 510, the County is required to complete a Floodplain Management Annual Progress Report and provide it to the public. This document serves as that report.

Adoption of the LMS / Updates

The Polk County LMS was originally adopted on June 15, 2005 as part of County Resolution 05-121 and is due for a five-year update by January 15, 2010.

Purpose and Objectives of the LMS

The purpose of the LMS is to develop a unified approach for dealing with identified hazards and hazard management problems, including flooding. The LMS serves as a tool to direct the County in its ongoing efforts to reduce vulnerability to the impacts produced by both natural and man-made hazards. The LMS also helps establish funding priorities for currently proposed mitigation projects and develops priority mitigation projects to be completed when funding becomes available.

The primary objectives of the LMS are to:

- Improve the community's resistance to damage from known natural, technological and societal hazards;
- Place Polk County in a position to compete more effectively for pre- and post- disaster mitigation funding;
- Reduce the cost of disasters at all levels; and
- Speed community recovery when disasters occur.

Local Mitigation Strategy Working Group

A Local Mitigation Strategy Working Group (LMSWG) was established to review and make recommendations concerning the LMS. The LMSWG consists of representatives from local municipalities, local organizations and County government and is coordinated by staff of the County Emergency Management Division. The LMSWG last met on August 21, 2009 to finalize the LMS update including revisions to the Prioritized Projects List (PPL) of projects eligible for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding.

HMGP Eligible Projects List

In 1998, the LMSWG established an initial PPL and has continually revised the list as necessary. Since establishing the list, several projects have been completed, implemented or are ongoing. The following are examples of projects undertaken through the LMS:

- The new Polk County Emergency Operation Center (EOC) which is currently under construction and will be elevated to protect against flood damage.
- The construction of four Storm Water Master Plan Basin projects in the City of Lakeland.
- The purchase and demolition of structures in repetitively flooded areas of the County. This land is then returned to its natural state and no further development can take place on the site(s).
- Two stormwater drainage projects and one wind retrofit project in the City of Winter Haven.
- The ongoing retrofitting of critical government facilities in Bartow and Lakeland.
- The ongoing SWFWMD cost-share program to update County floodplain FIRM panels.

CRS Program Participation

The LMS references the importance and benefit of Polk County's participation in the Community Rating System (CRS). As participants, the County established flood protection measures and educational opportunities beyond the minimum requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). These efforts have allowed Polk County to achieve a "Class 7" certification resulting in a 15% discount on flood insurance premiums for property owners in the unincorporated areas.

The County receives CRS points from a variety of activities that promote flood protection and education. These activities are conducted by various County departments. The following is a summary of these ongoing activities and the departments that perform the activity that results in points for the CRS program:

Activity	Department(s) or Division(s)	CRS Activity #
Maintain elevation certificates, make copies of certificates available to the public	Land Development Division	310
Provide Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) information, maintain updated FIRM panels	Land Development Division	320
Provide outreach to community / Flood protection information	Emergency Management / Land Development Division	330
Provide credited hazard disclosure measures; information on recorded plats	Land Development Division	340
Provide flood protection materials at public library	County Library System/ Land Development Division	350
Preserve floodplain in open space through zoning / Comprehensive Plan Land Use / public acquisition	Land Development Division / Natural Resources Division / Long Range Planning Division	420
Review new development for compliance with flood protection regulations	Land Development Division / Long Range Planning Division	430
Track substantial improvements / permitting to meet current requirements	Building and Codes Division / Land Development Division	430
Maintain elevation reference Marks	Transportation Engineering	440
Maintain FIRM panels issued since County began participation in the NFIP	Land Development Division	440
Maintain drainage systems through a regular program	Natural Resources Division	540
Enforce stream dumping regulations	Building and Codes Division / Public Works	540
Conduct test of flood warning / emergency response program	Emergency Management	610

Community Outreach

The County routinely engages in outreach as part of the ongoing effort to educate and inform citizens about flooding and flood protection. Some of these include:

- Participating in annual hurricane expos designed to help citizens prepare for the upcoming hurricane season. We discuss flooding and flood related issues caused by both natural and man-made sources including storms, poor drainage, and illegal dumping in streams, ditches, and drainage structures.
- Placing signs in flood prone areas which indicate that flooding is likely during large storms and providing its estimated depth.
- Providing seminars for local organizations to discuss potential or current flooding concerns relative to their industry.
- Attending County sponsored meetings where flooding is or may be a concern.
- Developing and maintaining Floodplain Management pages on the County's website to provide information and resources intended to help citizens make educated flood-related decisions.
- Providing a Certified Floodplain Manager in the Growth Management Customer Service area to answer permitting questions and concerns as they pertain to development in the floodplain.
- Providing a library of informative flood related brochures available to both the public and Polk County staff.

Certified Floodplain Manager Program

The Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) has established a national program for professional certification of floodplain managers. The program recognizes continuing education and professional development that enhances the knowledge and performance of local, state, federal, and private-sector floodplain managers. Seven staff members in the County's Growth Management Department have achieved the Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM) designation. This reflects Polk County's continued commitment to professional service in implementing the floodplain management plan.

Evaluation and Appraisal Report of the Comprehensive Plan Infrastructure Sub-Element

The Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) of the Polk County Comprehensive Plan was submitted to the Board of County Commissioners for adoption in March 2009 and was found sufficient by the Department of Community Affairs in May of 2009. The EAR includes a

component evaluating and apprising the Infrastructure Sub-Element of the Comprehensive Plan which includes Drainage and Stormwater Management.

The Infrastructure Sub-Element contains an analysis of the County's current drainage and stormwater management objectives and policies. It also provides recommendations to maintain or revise those objectives and policies. The EAR based amendments to the Comprehensive Plan that reflect the recommendations will begin in November 2009. The process of adopting the amendments includes three public hearings and a state level review. It is expected to be complete by August 2010.

Summary

The review of the LMS and Prioritized Projects List (PPL), which serves as the County's Floodplain Management Plan under the CRS, was recently completed by the LMS Working Group as part of the five-year update to the overall LMS. The five year update is due on January 15, 2010.

Polk County has achieved a "Class 7" certification under the CRS, primarily due to its significant outreach activities and projects undertaken by various County departments. This "Class 7" rating results in substantial discounts to flood insurance premiums in the unincorporated areas.

The County's Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) of the Polk County Comprehensive Plan, which includes analysis and recommendations on stormwater management objectives and policies is complete. The Polk County Comprehensive Plan is on schedule to be revised to reflect recommendations in the EAR.

If you have any questions about this report or the County's Floodplain Management guidelines please contact Randall Vogel at (863) 534-6767 or Stan Harris at (863) 534-6567. For general information about flooding and flood protection or to obtain additional copies of this report please visit www.polk-county.net/floodmanagement.