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THE BULLETIN

The Official Newsletter of the FDEM Mitigation Bureau



What's the Buzz? A Silver Jackets Update

By: Ian Ohlin

"Many partners, one team." It may be a catchy slogan, but the national Silver Jackets motto for interagency cooperation has echoed in Florida this year. Participating member organizations of the state's Silver Jackets team have been hard at work advancing its goals and identifying actions to reduce the threat of flooding in the Sunshine State.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's ongoing hydrologic and hydraulic analysis of Lake Martin in Bay County recently produced several key reports. A team from Florida State University conducted both field and lab work to analyze the lake's waters. The team was able to examine water quality, identify multiple pollution sources and provide valuable recommendations on restoration options, including non-structural green strategies.

Thanks to overwhelming support, two new Silver Jackets projects have been approved in Florida for Fiscal Year 2022-2023. The Immokalee Regional Water Plan project will bring local, state and federal partners together and leverage the US Army Corps of Engineers' expertise to tackle flooding issues from Lake Trafford in Collier county. The Seminole Tribe of Florida's Immokalee Reservation community can benefit from any mitigation actions proposed that would reduce flooding in developed areas and redirect excess water to nearby natural resource areas.

The Silver Jackets are also pleased to announce that the second approved project is the Florida Coastal Resilience Workshop. Due to the high risks of coastal storms and projected sea level rise in Florida, these virtual workshops will provide valued information, knowledge and tools that local jurisdiction's stakeholders need to plan and design projects to enhance their community's resiliency.

The Florida Silver Jackets team will hold their third quarterly meeting this month to provide updates to the ongoing projects and discuss possible ideas for future projects.

For questions or updates about the Florida Silver Jackets team, please contact Ian Ohlin at Ian.Ohlin@em.myflorida.com.



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Advancing Mitigation Brick by BRIC

By: Ian Ohlin

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recently announced the opening of the Fiscal Year 2021 application period for the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) non-disaster, hazard mitigation grant programs. All applications for these programs are submitted using the FEMA GO grant system. After the successful launch and popularity of the BRIC program last year, FEMA has made some significant changes to its newest mitigation grant.

The most notable change to BRIC is that the total available funding under the program has doubled, from \$500 million in FY20, to \$1 billion this year. The national competition for mitigation projects is expected to award an estimated \$919 million. FEMA also upped BRIC's state/territory allocation to \$56 million, FEMA expects this will provide up to \$1 million per applicant. This \$1 million allocation includes a bump in the funds available for mitigation planning and planning related activities, in the amount of \$500,000 per applicant. This year's tribal set-aside under BRIC has been set at \$25 million dollars and all federally recognized Tribal Governments may apply. Any BRIC funds that are not awarded from that set-aside will be re-allocated to non-financial Direct Technical Assistance for tribes. Priorities for FMA are remaining largely the same as FY20, with an allocation of \$160 million.

An additional significant change for this year's BRIC program will be its new priorities to enhance climate resilience and adaptation as well as providing equitable assistance to underserved communities. These goals have also been codified into BRIC's latest project scoring rubrics. Additionally, all efforts to incentivize natural hazard risk reduction activities, which mitigate risk to public infrastructure, will include prioritization for disadvantaged communities, as defined in White House *Executive Order 14008 – "Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad."*



For more information on the BRIC program please visit: <https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/building-resilient-infrastructure-communities> or, <https://www.floridadisaster.org/dem/mitigation/building-resilient-infrastructure-and-communities-bric-grant-program/>. To apply for BRIC, please visit: <https://go.fema.gov/>



Mitigation Bureau Environmental Specialists Thrive with More Responsibility

Submitted By: Kayla Born

Following the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with FEMA in 2017, Environmental Specialists in the Mitigation Bureau assumed the responsibility of conducting Environmental and Historic Preservation reviews for grant applications. Florida continues to be the only state with this delegated responsibility.

Since the inception of the MOA, the specialists have taken on greater responsibilities in their reviews and the Division has hired reviewers with historic preservation backgrounds to speed up the lengthy review process. The specialists are also preparing Environmental Assessments and writing Findings of No Significant Impacts (FONSI). An Environmental Assessment is conducted for complex projects that don't fall into the predetermined categories, but also do not cause significant impacts to human health or the environment. These assessments evaluate the project and all alternatives to determine the environmental and human health impacts of each action on resources such as floodplains, threatened and endangered species, cultural resources, socioeconomics, geology and soils, and transportation. If no significant impacts are found, a FONSI is issued.

Overall, this process is very time intensive and requires a greater level of review than less environmentally significant projects. To date, the Environmental Specialists are working on four Environmental Assessments and they have completed one Programmatic Environmental Assessment that was approved in 2019. With this increased responsibility, the Mitigation Bureau is able to have greater control over the grant application review process, provide faster reviews and improve direct customer service with greater transparency to the subapplicants than was previously possible.

FEPA Mitigation Training

By: The Florida Emergency Preparedness Association



The Florida Emergency Preparedness Association (FEPA) continues to support Mitigation through its programs, projects, and training. On August 2-3, 2021, FEPA presented the Association-developed County Emergency Management Program Director/Key Staff training in Crystal River, Florida. The training curriculum was developed "By Florida Emergency Managers, For Florida Emergency Managers" and includes a cadre of FEPA member subject matter experts as instructors.

The training includes a comprehensive module focused on Mitigation. FEPA Mitigation Working Group Co-Chair Kelly Wilson, St. Johns County Emergency Management was on hand in Crystal River to deliver the module and share her specific insights and experience on a wide range of Mitigation topics. These included both pre-disaster and post-disaster mitigation activities and funding opportunities and requirements for Local Mitigation Strategies and related planning and public outreach efforts. The 2021 curriculum was recently updated to include specifics on the federal Building Resilient Communities and Infrastructure program. Kelly is a recognized Florida Professional Emergency Manager and regarded for her mitigation knowledge as well as her practical implementation of local mitigation programs and projects.

The overall FEPA training includes detailed modules on local "Blue Skies" emergency management responsibilities as well as other specific mission areas of Preparedness, Prevention, Response and Recovery. In addition, the curriculum provides instruction on county funding sources and management and includes a library of resource materials to support local program implementation. In total, the training represents 16 contact hours of instruction and is recognized by the FEPA Certification Program as approved training in all mission areas. Keep an eye on the FEPA website www.fepa.org for announcements of future course deliveries!



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Jacksonville District

The Prettiest Wall You Will Never See

By: Jim Yocum, US Army Corps of Engineers Jacksonville District

The beauty of the cutoff wall shoring up the Herbert Hoover Dike (HHD) around Lake Okeechobee isn't in its physical appearance. The beauty lies instead in how the wall hidden inside the 143-mile earthen dam can improve the lives of those living in South Florida. The original dike began its life in 1915 when local residents made a pile along the shore of the lake consisting of dredged gravel, rock, limestone, sand and shells. The materials and methods had nothing in common with how a modern dam would be constructed. The dike allowed too much water to move through it, washing away material as it traveled through the earthen dam.

Failure of the dam led to the loss of thousands of lives during hurricanes in 1926 and 1928 when water overtopped the dam and flooded local communities. USACE was tasked with construction of a more robust levee around portions of the lake, and a 1947 hurricane led to Congressional authorization to build what was eventually the Herbert Hoover Dike visitors see today. Completed in the 1960s, the earthen dam still faced problems with seepage, or water flowing through and underneath the dike carrying parts of the dike with it and potentially causing further foundation issues.

That's where the invisible to the eye cutoff wall makes its appearance. To ensure water doesn't take portions of the dike material with it, a wall is being built below grade to force that water to go deeper into the ground and slow it down enough that it can't carry parts of the dike with it as it flows. Since 2007, the wall is being constructed inside the dike, reaching 60 feet deep in some locations. Most pedestrians walking the trails around the lake have little idea that they are right on top of an invisible, \$2 billion dam safety project that makes living around the lake safer. Now, with the cutoff wall nearing its completion date of 2022, Floridians are beginning to find out what benefits that infrastructure investment is buying.

Those living in the shadow of HHD will enjoy less risk of disasters like the 1926 and 1928 hurricanes because the dike is stronger and more resilient. Every alternative reviewed so far scores well in performance measures related to dam safety. Those who rely on the water in the lake – city utilities and agriculture, but also Everglades National Park and Florida Bay – will see more water available in every alternative reviewed to date. The Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Estuary communities will both benefit from a reduction in the highest volume flows under the current schedule, and the Caloosahatchee will see an increase in the optimal flows needed for salinity control during the dry season.

"We aren't anywhere near to being done, but as we move into optimization, we believe we have a really good starting point from which to work," said Tim Gysan, project manager for the Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual project. "We will continue to focus on improving the preferred alternative through the fall of 2021, and be ready to go through the formal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and complete the project in time to use the new operations manual when the HHD rehab work is finished in 2022."

Gysan cautioned that completing the HHD rehab and writing a new manual isn't the final solution to all of the water management concerns stakeholders face. "The flexibility of a rehabilitated dike is great, and there are definite benefits to be enjoyed with a new operating manual, but this isn't a silver bullet for all the region's concerns about lake management," he said. "We still have limitations that can only be addressed by completing new infrastructure, including components of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. But we do believe that when the HHD is done in 2022, this new operating manual is going to provide benefits to everyone and perform much better than our current regulation schedule can."

To see the latest or learn how to join upcoming Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM) meetings, visit the Jacksonville District website at <https://www.saj.usace.army.mil/LOSOM/>.

Strong Homes: Resilience Champions for a Stronger Future

By: Federal Alliance for Safe Homes  **FLASH**

As part of the continuing Strong Homes collaboration, the nonprofit Federal Alliance for Safe Homes (FLASH) joined the Alabama-West Florida Conference (AWFC) of the United Methodist Church with support from the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), and Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS), to repair and construct thirty-five homes for Hurricane Michael impacted families with unmet economic needs.

FLASH secured in-kind services from FEMA and various partners to provide engineering and technical analysis expertise to adapt existing MDS house plans to meet the nationally recognized beyond-code Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS) FORTIFIED™ Gold standard.



Additionally, FLASH obtained product discounts and donations to achieve code-plus resilience standards from partners including Huber Engineered Woods (ZIP System), Simpson Strong-Tie (structural connectors), and Global Protection Products (hurricane shutters). American Red Cross, FLASH Legacy Partner Lowe's, and Gulf County Hurricane Housing Recovery Program provided additional funding.

One of the recipients stated, "When the materials were being delivered for my home, I realized this wasn't going to be a normal house. This house isn't going anywhere. I am truly blessed to have this home."

These resilient homes will yield indirect benefits to the affected communities through future losses avoided and reduction in future unmet needs related to long-term housing recovery, continued improvement in affordable market-based insurance availability due to a stronger housing stock, and reduced shelter and debris removal costs in the future.

Strong Homes provides resources and training necessary to incorporate post-disaster best practices and beyond-code construction methods into rebuilding and repair projects for low-income disaster survivors. Plans include program expansion beyond high wind and hurricane-affected areas to address wildfire and additional hazards in the future. For more information or to get involved contact info@flash.org.

FDEM Mitigation Trainings

There are mitigation trainings to look forward to through the end of the year. The Mitigation Planning Unit conducted multiple *G-393, Mitigation for Emergency Managers* trainings in Lee, Santa Rosa and Monroe counties. There are two more offerings currently scheduled for this year.

The workshop builds participants' abilities to perform the responsibilities of an emergency manager, create strategies for disaster-resistant communities, identify local mitigation opportunities, select mitigation solutions to hazard risk problems and find resources to carry out mitigation activities.

The Planning Unit also offers the more compact *G-318 Mitigation Planning Workshop* and the *FL-391 LMS Update Manual* trainings. If you have a need for a mitigation training, reach out to Laura Dhuwe to schedule a class in your county. It may be spooky season, but don't be scared to learn about mitigation!

Upcoming Trainings:

Region 4: Winter Haven	10/12-10/14
Region 2: Tallahassee	12/07-12/09

Mitigation Spotlight



We are so pleased to congratulate our Bureau Chief, Miles Anderson, who received the 2020 GHC Lifetime Achievement Award. Due to COVID-19, there was not an in-person award ceremony, but we are happy to celebrate this great achievement! Miles has worked tirelessly to help the citizens of Florida and has truly made Florida a leader in Mitigation.

The Lifetime Achievement Award is given to an individual that has made outstanding or substantial contributions and accomplishments in the field of hurricane preparedness, response, recovery or mitigation at local, state or national level over an entire career.

The Cyclone of LMS Updates!

We are in a Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) update cycle. Each plan must be updated every five years and we only have a few plans left. Keep track with us as we finish up this cycle!

County Congratulations!

We want to congratulate Alachua, Flagler, Marion, Polk, and Franklin counties on completing their update cycle!

- 3 Under Review
- 4 In Revisions
- 1 Approved Pending Adoption
- 16 Approved
- 41 Cycle Complete
- 4 Expired

Mitigation Outreach

FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Division delivered the first-ever virtual Hazard Mitigation Partners Workshop in May 2021. The theme of the workshop was Resilience, Equity, and Future Conditions and it featured approximately 30 hours of content by more than 100 presenters!

Resilience Spotlight

Connecting FEMA's Strategic Vision with the Community Perspective Presented by Albert Padilla, New Jersey Public Schools



In Padilla's presentation, he discussed how a middle school in Jersey City leveraged partnerships with local representatives to implement storm water management activities following a major flooding event. The success of the project helped to create a Sustainability STEAM challenge to integrate these concepts into the children's learning every year!

To see this presentation and all of the other session recordings, visit: <https://www.fema.gov/event/2021-hazard-mitigation-partners-workshop>

Need More Information?

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The Bureau of Mitigation

Mitigation is an integral part of the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM). Mitigation actions reduce or eliminate the loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters. Due to Florida's weather, geography and miles of coastline the state is highly vulnerable to disasters. Disasters can be very costly to both the citizens and government.

Under the direction of Division Director Kevin Guthrie and State Hazard Mitigation Officer, Miles E. Anderson, the Bureau of Mitigation administers several federal mitigation grant programs including the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Program, and the Flood Mitigation Assistance Program. The Bureau also administers a state funded mitigation program called the Hurricane Loss Mitigation Program.

If you would like to know more about mitigation in Florida please visit:

www.floridadisaster.org/mitigation.

