



West Haven, Connecticut

Buy-Out Program Helps Floodplain Homeowners Relocate

Lessons Learned and Recommendations:

- These programs are all about the people.
- Patience is needed when working with these large federal programs and you need to be prepared to spring into action when the program gets going.
- These projects take a large amount of staff time. Factor in more time than you think you need.
- Maximize the availability of local staff to answer public questions and concerns to address the concerns and questions of local citizens.

What they did, and why:

West Haven is a small beach town in Connecticut that has seen significant damage in almost every major storm in the last century. In particular, the Old Field Creek neighborhood has seen significant amounts of repetitive loss and the residents decided to seek help from their town to address this issue.

In 2014, West Haven applied for funds through the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Emergency Watershed Protection Program. Funding was awarded to buy-out homeowners that had experienced repetitive loss, remove homes and restore the land to natural features. Since the beginning of the program in 2014, the town has coordinated the purchase of 15 homes, with 16 homes enrolling in the next phase of the project.



Benefits:

- Communities receive fair market prices for their homes that would otherwise not be saleable because of damage or cost.
- Surrounding are protected from flood damage because the restored wetlands will provide natural flood protection.

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“We’re taking people out of harm’s way while restoring the land to a more natural condition.”

*— Tom Morgart,
NRCS Connecticut
state conservationist*