

Monroe County Local Mitigation Strategy

Meeting 1: Local Mitigation Strategy Working Group Project Kick-Off Meeting

Time & Date: Tuesday June 16, 2020 2:00 PM

Location: Zoom Video Conference Call

Introductions

David Stroud and Abby Moore, consultants from Wood, facilitated the meeting. David began by providing the meeting agenda. He then had Jeff Manning of Monroe County introduce himself. Jeff explained that although the LMS update initially had a June 2020 deadline for review and adoption, Monroe County requested to push the deadline in order to receive grant funding for the facilitation and update of the plan. The final deadline will be in December for approval from FEMA and adoption. There were 23 people in attendance and recorded via screenshots of the Zoom participants list.

Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Requirement

David discussed the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 plan update requirement and the HMGP grant process. Communities are required to update their hazard mitigation plans every five years to remain eligible for federal disaster funding.

Trends in Disasters

Trends are resulting in increases costs for disaster response and recovery. As growth and development occur, exposure to hazard events increases. Exposure to risk includes the people as well as the infrastructure and buildings. Because exposure has increased, when hazard events occur they cause more damage. There are also trends toward more severe hazard events. There has been a continual increase in hazard expenses and an increase in the issuance of major disaster declarations. David reviewed a list of the costliest natural disasters by NOAA estimates. All of them occurred within the last 30 years, and 12 of the 16 occurred within the last 20 years. David also noted that these costs are general damage estimates, but that the actual cost of disasters to state and local governments, businesses, insurance companies, homeowners, and others is much higher.

Four reasons why addressing these trends is a priority were presented: 1) the cost of doing nothing is too high as the costs of response and recovery continue to grow; 2) many events are predictable and repetitive; 3) loss reduction activities can be undertaken, and they work, they're cost effective and environmentally sound, and there are funds available to help; and 4) there are legal and moral responsibilities to act.

Planning Requirements

David reviewed the Disaster Mitigation Act (DMA) of 2000 planning requirements, which include a four-phase planning process: organize resources, risk assessment, develop a mitigation plan, and adoption and implementation. The approach that will be led by the consultant team at Wood blends this four-phase process with the processes of the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Program and the Community Rating System (CRS) Floodplain Management Planning. This completed Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) will meet the requirements of all three FEMA programs.

David discussed the main phases of this planning process, as follows:

Phase I: Organize Resources, will involve planning for public involvement and coordinating with other departments and agencies. Other stakeholders to involve include FDEM, FEMA Region IV, NOAA, other adjoining communities, citizens, schools, businesses, and others.

Phase II: Risk Assessment entails hazard identification (what can happen here), vulnerability assessment (what will be affected or impacted), and capability assessment (how prepared we are).

David presented Wood's recommendations for which hazards to include in the plan. It was noted that although Extreme Heat was not included in the County's 2015 plan, it should be included in the update due to the increasing number of days with high heat indices. LMSWG members recommended the addition of communication systems

failures as part of impact considered for hurricanes, floods, and severe weather. Finally, the LMSWG members recommended the addition of Cyber Threat and Radiological Accidents as technological hazards.

Based on this discussion, the following hazards will be profiled: Flood, Hurricane/Tropical Storm, Severe Storms and Tornadoes (including Thunderstorm Winds, Lightning, Hail, Tornadoes, and Waterspouts), Wildfire, Coastal Erosion, Drought, Extreme Heat, Sea Level Rise and Climate Change, Cyber Threats, and Radiological Accidents. The vulnerability assessment will use Monroe County Parcel data run through Hazus as well as local qualitative knowledge. Hazards will be prioritized using the Priority Risk Index. Each community will self-assess capability to determine ability to implement projects and where gaps exist.

Phase III: Develop Mitigation Plan involves setting planning goals, reviewing mitigation alternatives, and drafting an action plan. Typical strategies are to alter the hazard, avert the hazard, adapt to the hazard, or avoid the hazard. In addition to reviewing initiatives from the previous plan, the LMSWG may need to develop new initiatives. David noted that in this process Wood will ensure that the County meets the CRS requirements for considering mitigation alternatives and creating a robust list of actions to maximize CRS credit for the plan.

Scope of Work

The plan will meet the following criteria:

- The plan will include all required elements, as defined in the FEMA Local Mitigation Plan Review Guide and the LMS Update Review Guide.
- The plan will meet or exceed the final rule for local mitigation planning found in 44 CFR, Section 201.6, in order to be approved by FEMA as well as any relevant FDEM requirements.
- Natural hazards assessed in the plan will coordinate with the current FEMA-approved State Mitigation Plan.
- The plan will include natural and human-caused hazards and mitigation measures.
- The plan will incorporate any local climate adaptation data and findings.

Project Schedule

The anticipated project schedule was presented. The process will aim for completion of a final draft document by December 2020 to send to FDEM for review. This timeline does not include final approval and adoption of the plan.

Plan Website & Public Survey

Abby presented the website for the planning process, which will be a tool for LMSWG coordination and public outreach. The website is www.monroecountyfl-lms.com. The site contains upcoming meetings announcements, meeting agendas and minutes, draft documents of the plan update, information on the identified hazards, and opportunities to provide feedback including the public survey. All communities are asked to place a link to this website on their local community pages to encourage more public involvement.

Public Meeting

Abby shared that the first Public Meeting is planned for July 7th at 5 p.m. via Zoom and asked that all participating jurisdictions assist in publicizing the meeting. Any community member who wants to participate can send an email to Abby and will receive an invitation to the Zoom meeting. For CRS credits, publicizing the meeting must be done in three different ways. Abby will send out wording for emails and social media posts. Abby asked that any postings be shared with the Wood team in order to document in the final plan.

Next Steps

Community representatives need to complete the Data Collection Guide and return it to Abby at abigail.moore@woodplc.com by Friday, July 10th. Representatives should come to the next meeting having reviewed existing mitigation initiatives and identified the status for all existing mitigation actions from the 2015 LMS. It was noted that more substantial information than “ongoing” must be provided for continuing actions; it should be clearly noted for each action whether it’s Completed, Deleted, or Carried Forward. Representatives should also be prepared to discuss revisions to the mitigation goals. The capability assessment and past actions are posted on the plan website and will be emailed out.