



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers®**  
New York District

# Passaic River Basin Flood Management (Floodway Buy-out) New Jersey

## FACT SHEET

**DESCRIPTION:** Flooding has long been a problem in the Passaic River Basin. Since colonial times, floods have claimed lives and damaged property. The most severe flood, the "flood of record," occurred in 1903, and more recent floods in 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, two in 1975, 1984, 1992, 1999, 2001, and 2005 were sufficiently devastating to warrant Federal Disaster declarations. The flood of 1984 resulted in the loss of three lives and caused \$642 million in damages (October 2006 dollars). Tropical Storm Floyd in September 1999 caused over \$244 million in flood damages (October 2006 dollars). The April 2007 flood caused over \$686 million in damages (October 2006 dollars).

**AUTHORIZATION:** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has been working on plans to reduce flooding in the basin since 1936, but no comprehensive plan has yet been implemented. Congress authorized a new study of the Passaic River Basin for the State of New Jersey in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1976 (Public Law 94-587) which led to a plan authorized in WRDA 1990 and modified in WRDA 1992, WRDA 1996, and WRDA 2000. The project includes several elements (see separate fact sheet on the Passaic River Mainstem), which are currently being implemented throughout the basin.

The element described herein is the Floodway Buy-out (specific authorization: Section 1148 of WRDA 1996 and Section 327 of WRDA 2000). The cost sharing is set at 75% Federal and 25% non-Federal. The State of New Jersey through the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) is the non-Federal sponsor. The Floodway Buy-out involves the acquisition and removal from the State defined Floodway of approximately 800 homes in the municipalities of Fairfield, Lincoln Park, Wayne, Pompton Lakes, Montville, East Hanover, Pequannock, Little Falls, and Riverdale. These homes are subject to frequent flood damages as documented in the draft Floodway Buy-out Study prepared by the Corps in October 1995. The estimated cost of the buy-outs was \$194,000,000 (October 1994 prices). The authorization specifies that the buy-outs are to be from willing sellers. The State began to implement the buy-outs through the State's Blue Acres Program in the late 1990's utilizing the draft report and \$15,000,000 in State funding, which has been expended.

**STATUS:** Federal appropriations totaling \$1,250,000 were made by Congress in Fiscal Years 2003, 2004, and 2005. The NJDEP indicated that it would act as the non-Federal sponsor in 2004. The Corps and State have completed a limited update of the 1995 draft study. The report focuses on two areas of the Floodway in Wayne and Pompton Lakes for a total of 30 homes as requested by the NJDEP. The report includes an update of costs, benefits, an environmental assessment to meet National Environmental Policy Act requirements, and coordination with the involved communities. The limited update draft report and environmental assessment were released for public review in July 2005. A final report was issued in August 2005. A public meeting was held in September 2005 to solicit interest in the buyouts. In April and August 2008, full paybacks of funds reprogrammed were returned to the project, totaling \$712,000. These funds will allow a Project Cooperation Agreement to be signed with the NJDEP and the acquisition of one or two homes. It should be noted that the project is not economically justified and future appropriations will be required by Congress to continue project implementation beyond the funds allocated to date.

**PROJECT COST:** (Estimate is based upon the limited update for 30 homes at December 2004 prices).

Estimated Federal Cost	\$7,460,000
Estimated Non-Federal Cost	\$2,486,000
Total	\$9,946,000

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