



FEMA

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News Release

VILLAGE OF BROWN DEER WINS FLOOD BATTLE

NEW BERLIN, Wis.—More than five inches of rain soaked the village of Brown Deer on July 22, 2010, putting the city’s mitigation project to the test.

Incorporated in 1955, the village of Brown Deer has been plagued with flooding over the years especially in its low lying areas near two tributaries of Beaver Creek and South Branch Creek, which funnel down to the Milwaukee River.

“The community had a lot of concrete-lined channels that moved storm water away from properties and down to the river,” said Village Manager Russell Van Gompel. “In a normal situation, that would work. However, when the Milwaukee River is high, the channels do not carry the capacity that they can at other times, resulting in flooding.”

Two significant flood events in 1997 and 1998 heightened the need for flood mitigation activities, particularly after nine homes were labeled repetitive loss properties. Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recommended that Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds be used to remove the flood prone homes. At a cost of \$1,018,831, of which \$764,123 came from federal funds and \$127,354 each from the state and local governments, the nine properties were acquired. Following removal of the homes, a storm water detention basin was created with funding from the Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD).

The HMGP provides grants to states and local governments to implement long-term hazard mitigation measures after a major disaster declaration. The purpose of the HMGP is to reduce the loss of life and property due to natural disasters and to enable mitigation measures to be implemented during immediate recovery from a disaster.

Three other detention basins were also constructed with funding from MMSD. A 2.5-acre detention pond was built adjacent to the public library. This facility is capable of holding approximately 5.5 million gallons of water during a rainstorm. After a rain event, water captured in the basin goes back to South Branch Creek. Another five-acre basin was constructed to hold

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approximately four million gallons of water. Built up stream, a third basin is capable of holding 6.2 million gallons of storm water.

The village also executed two additional initiatives to assist residents in the battle to manage storm water. The “Early Out Project” involved reducing the volume of storm-water runoff flowing to one of the village’s neighborhood by rerouting water flow. “Operation Flood Fix,” with funding provided by a Community Development Block Grant, low- and moderate-income households had flood-proofing improvements made to their homes, including the installation of back-flow prevention valves in their basement floor drains and glass-block basement windows.

Van Gompel directly attributes the lack of devastation in the village from the July storms to flood mitigation measures in place. Eleven flood-prone homes were demolished, removing residents from harm’s way. Detention basins were in place holding floodwaters at bay. Those detention basins also mean that 12 homes are no longer inside the 100-year floodplain which reduces the cost of their flood insurance premiums.

“Because of all the work we did after the 1998 flood, we were able, for the most part, to avoid significant damage to homes in this recent event. We had up to five inches of rain in a two-hour period. It was really intense!”

FEMA’s mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

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