



## REGION III

# Resilience Report

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FEMA

**RiskMAP**  
Increasing Resilience Together

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## Upcoming Events:

7/15/2020: FEMA Region III Coffee Break Webinar: [Addressing the Risks of High Hazard Potential Hams \(HHPD\)](#), Webinar

7/21/2020: Training webinar: [VADCR's Flood Risk Products](#)

## West Pittston, Pennsylvania Increases CRS Rating

After two years of working on mitigation measures, the Borough of West Pittston in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, has achieved an improved rating with the FEMA Community Rating System (CRS). On May 1, 2020, West Pittston achieved a Class 7 CRS participant status, which provides residents with discounts on flood insurance premiums. The Class 7 rating qualifies National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) policyholders to receive a 15-percent premium discount on policies rated for Special Flood Hazard Areas and a 5-percent discount for policies in moderate and minimal risk areas. As a result, Borough residents will save over \$26,000 on flood insurance premiums each year.

Previously, West Pittston has been involved with other flood risk reduction programs. In 2011, the community

7/21/2020: Training webinar:  
[VADCR's Virginia Flood Risk Information System](#)

7/23/2020: Training webinar:  
[VADCR's Virginia Flood Risk Information System](#)

7/23/2020: Training webinar:  
[VADCR's Flood Risk Products](#)

7/28/2020: Training webinar:  
[VADCR's Community Rating System](#)

7/28/2020: Training webinar:  
[VADCR's Floodplain Management Ordinance Training](#)

7/30/2020: Training webinar:  
[VADCR's Floodplain Ordinance Training](#)

7/30/2020: Training webinar:  
[VADCR's Community Rating System](#)

8/3/2020: Training webinar:  
[VADCR's Flood Risk Products](#)

8/3/2020: Training webinar:  
[VADCR's Virginia Flood Risk Information System](#)

8/3/2020 – 8/7/2020: Virtual conference: [2020 Impact Summit: Community Data – Catalyst for Change](#)

8/5/2020: Training webinar:  
[VADCR's Flood Risk Products](#)

8/5/2020: Training webinar:  
[VADCR's Virginia Flood Risk Information System](#)

8/10/2020: Training webinar:  
[VADCR's Floodplain Ordinance Training](#)

8/10/2020: Training webinar:  
[VADCR's Community Rating System](#)

experienced severe flooding from Tropical Storm Lee, which damaged more than 900 structures and caused roughly \$100 million in damages. With guidance from FEMA, West Pittston developed a long-term recovery plan detailing 21 projects that would help the borough become more resilient. The Borough of West Pittston has since participated in FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and Flood Mitigation Assistance Program, as well as the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Program to implement flood mitigation projects.

The Borough of West Pittston's flood mitigation efforts will help protect life and property, save community residents money on their flood insurance premiums, and make the community more resilient overall.



8/11/2020: DCNR's August Webinar: [Making Mitigation Work](#)

8/12/2020: Training webinar: [VADCR's Floodplain Ordinance Training](#)

8/12/2020: Training webinar: [VADCR's Community Rating System](#)

9/14/2020 – 9/16/2020: [2020 PAFPM Conference](#), Harrisburg, PA

9/13/2020 – 9/16/2020: [Virginia APA 2020 Annual Conference](#), Richmond, VA

9/16/2020: FEMA Region III Coffee Break Webinar: [Tracking Risk Reduction through Your Capabilities Assessment](#)

11/25/2020: FEMA Region III Coffee Break Webinar: [Bringing Lifelines into Hazard Mitigation Planning](#)

## Kristin Owen, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Receives National State NFIP Coordinator Award



Kristin Owen, the Commonwealth of Virginia's Acting State National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Coordinator, has received the Best Innovation/Project award for 2019. This annual honor is awarded based on peer nominations for contributions to floodplain management and flood loss reduction measures. In her relatively brief time as Acting State NFIP Coordinator, Kristin has worked to implement new trainings to improve floodplain management knowledge across the state, even with limited staff. This included an NFIP Basics Training road show and partnering with regional Planning District Commissions to offer training to local floodplain administrators. In addition, she also worked with Virginia Tech's Graduate School to

develop and offer a weekend module course on local floodplain management to educate and prepare students about to enter the workforce, including students in the engineering, geoscience, and planning disciplines. This course has been offered twice, and several students have graduated and entered floodplain management related jobs.



Congratulations to Kristin on her achievements!

## Maryland Department of Environment Holds Flood Readiness Seminar Facebook Live Event



In May, the Maryland Department of the Environment and FEMA partnered with the Ocean Pines Association, a neighborhood organization representing residents on Maryland's Eastern Shore, to host the first Facebook Live Flood Readiness Webinar. The event, which was also supported by the Maryland Emergency Management Agency and the Maryland Insurance Administration, was initially supposed to take place in person but switched to virtual due to the pandemic, and was an effort to connect directly with residents of the Ocean Pines community. The webinar aimed to increase awareness about the value of flood insurance and presented ways of mitigating flood risk to protect life and property from future flood events.

By partnering with the Ocean Pines Association, local and regional flood risk and flood insurance experts had the opportunity to interact with residents in real time to discuss and answer questions. Topics included using Flood Insurance Rate Maps to understand flood risk, the difference between homeowner's and flood insurance, common types of flooding and stormwater issues in Ocean Pines, and more. The webinar was a success, with 23 active attendees and over 300 Facebook event views.

## DNREC Launches Website to Share Information About Clear Brook Floodplain Map Updates

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) is proposing floodplain mapping changes in the Seaford area of the Clear Brook watershed. Residents of the community were asked to review and comment on these updates by visiting a [new website](#) managed by DNREC. This website features an informational video that discusses how the proposed changes may affect residents' properties and flood insurance rates. Maps are also provided to show exactly where changes would be made along the floodplain. Residents were asked to record their comments through an online comment form by May 31, 2020.



DNREC has been a long-time partner with FEMA. The agency works to improve the accuracy of flood risk maps statewide. Delaware's current flood risk maps are used to set flood insurance rates and enforce local floodplain ordinances. The proposed mapping changes in the Seaford area are expected to be adopted by FEMA, and ultimately incorporated into Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for the watershed.

## Upcoming FEMA Region III Coffee Break Webinars



FEMA Region III continues to host a webinar series for hazard mitigation planners and other partners interested in reducing risk in their communities. These “Coffee Breaks” are hour-long webinar sessions hosted every other month to provide mitigation best practices and highlight the work happening at federal, regional, state, and community levels to reduce risk across the region.

The Coffee Breaks are open to everyone involved in hazard mitigation, resiliency, or risk reduction planning in the public and private sectors, which includes community planners, emergency managers, floodplain managers, GIS technicians, government officials, contractors, and anyone else involved in the development and implementation of hazard mitigation and risk reduction strategies.

Please see below for descriptions of the upcoming 2020 Coffee Breaks.

### [Addressing the Risks of High Hazard Potential Dams \(HHPD\) - July 15, 2020](#)

Did you know that the average age of dams throughout the United States is well beyond the anticipated 50-year lifespan? In several states across FEMA Region III, the average age is over 70 years. Aging dam infrastructure is becoming a national concern as High Hazard Potential Dam (HHPD) failures put Americans at risk, result in infrastructure damage, and can have substantial negative economic and environmental impacts. In order to prevent future catastrophic events due to dam failure, it is important for both the state and local government to understand the risk of the 1,739 HHPDs that span across FEMA Region III. This webinar will explore how the risk of dam failure can be effectively assessed and addressed through state and local Hazard Mitigation Plans, FEMA's HHPD grant program, and emergency action plans.

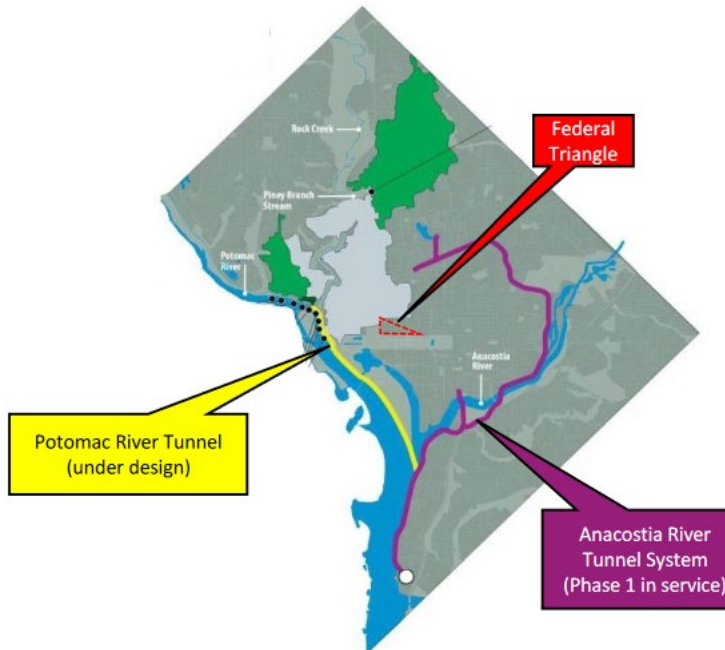
### [Tracking Risk Reduction through Your Capabilities Assessment - September 16, 2020](#)

An important, but often overlooked component of any Hazard Mitigation Plan is the capabilities assessment. The capabilities assessment helps a community understand the effectiveness of a mitigation program and if risk is being reduced within the community. The capabilities assessment is not meant to be a simple list of laws, regulations, policies, and programs that exist at the federal, state, and local levels. The assessment should analyze effectiveness, challenges, and issues regarding the implementation and maintenance of a hazard mitigation program. Using a newly developed FEMA Region III tool, we will explore various data sources, metrics, and methodologies for analyzing your community's capabilities. Your community should strive to answer the question, *so what?* when it comes to having a land use plan, an updated building code, and funding opportunities.

### [Bringing Lifelines into Hazard Mitigation Planning - November 25, 2020](#)

Energy, Water, and Transportation: These are just some examples of “lifelines,” which FEMA defines as anything that enables the continuous operation of government functions and critical business. What lifelines in your community are essential to human health, safety, and economic security? Are you aware of any lifelines that exist in at-risk areas based on risk modeling? This Coffee Break will explore how lifelines can be assessed as whole systems and incorporated into your Hazard Mitigation Plan through risk assessment modeling and mitigation action development which can help to improve and invest in the lifelines in your community.

## DC Silver Jackets Continues to Advance Federal Triangle Area Flood Initiative Through Charette Held in February 2020



The Federal Triangle Area (FTA) in Washington, DC is between Pennsylvania Avenue, Constitution Avenue, and 15th Street NW. It is home to a unified group of important and prominent Federal office buildings. In 2006, the FTA experienced severe flooding that caused significant and costly damage to buildings, utilities, and the Metro system. This resulted in major disruptions to the operations of agencies and businesses in the area.

When the FTA flooded again, the DC Silver Jackets interagency flood risk management team began to host events focused on mitigating future flood risk. The events included two workshops

held in June and September 2018, several working group meetings, and a stakeholder leadership meeting held in May 2019. The goal of these events was to begin building a plan to address the FTA's flooding issues. One outcome from this initiative was to host a multi-agency charrette to identify comprehensive options to address interior flooding in the FTA.

The charrette was held on February 21, 2020, and the attendees included the District of Columbia and Federal and regional agencies with facility management and/or operational responsibilities in the area. The individuals involved were facility managers, planners, engineers, historic and cultural specialists, environmental specialists, emergency managers, and others, representing 13 different agencies. The workshop focused on systemwide solutions rather than individual flood risk management measures.

Prior to the charrette, the planning team came up with 13 potential options and decided to focus on five, discussing the feasibility of implementation. Attendees were split into small working groups and used a set of 16 criteria to evaluate each of the five potential options. The criteria focused on effectiveness, implementability, long-term impacts, and a qualitative assessment. The full charrette presentation can be accessed [here](#).

After a full day of discussing and evaluating various concepts for the FTA, a new pumping station for the National Mall was the widely preferred solution. This solution would effectively manage the flood risk and likely garner the most support. The next steps toward implementation include holding funding and implementation meetings with key stakeholders, completing the FTA building inventory, and conducting a preliminary flood damage and impact assessment.

## FEMA Region III Supports Hazard Mitigation Plan Scope of Work Development

FEMA Region III has been working on a new program to help communities prepare for updating their Hazard Mitigation Plans (HMP). HMPs must be updated, approved by FEMA, and adopted by the participating jurisdictions every five years. This program focuses on engaging communities well in advance of their HMP expiration date and helps them think ahead about what can and should be achieved during the update process.



Through this program, State partners and FEMA Region III provide technical assistance to plan owners (i.e., the entity sponsoring an HMP update) to develop a detailed scope of work (SOW). Plan owners then use the SOW to guide the update process, apply for planning grants, and secure technical consultant support if needed.

Many tools have been created to help support this initiative, including the Plan Update SOW Guidance and Checklist, the HMP Timeline, and a SOW Webinar. The guidance is intended to help plan owners develop a comprehensive SOW that will inform a clear path to creating a successful HMP that leads to mitigation action in the community. The checklist provides the means for requesting focused technical assistance from their respective States and FEMA Region III. The HMP Timeline identifies key milestones during the five-year planning cycle of adoption, maintenance and implementation. These tools are introduced to communities through the SOW Webinar, which is conducted as a joint effort by State partners and FEMA Region III. When the updated HMP is complete, communities will be better able to sustain the implementation of mitigation actions and accomplish long-term risk reduction.

This program was successfully initiated for plan owners in Maryland on June 16, 2020, through a virtual SOW Webinar. There were 20 people in attendance, representing 11 different communities in Maryland. As a result, participants have followed up with the State, requesting focused technical assistance. This program will be launched in Virginia on July 21, 2020, and in other Region III States in the future.

## Best Practice: RISE Resilience Initiative



RISE is a non-profit organization based in Hampton Roads, Virginia. Their mission is to accelerate innovation and business growth by identifying, demonstrating, and scaling solutions to coastal communities' resilience challenges. RISE does this by offering a "one-stop-shop"

that allows solution-builders to effectively move from designs to implementation. The organization identifies resilience problems, sources solutions, facilitates deployment and validation, builds enterprise readiness, and provides catalytic funding.

RISE recently announced the five winners of the 2020 RISE Coastal Community Resilience Challenge. The winners are all small businesses that will each receive up to \$250,000 to use cutting-edge products that help coastal communities mitigate the impacts of sea level rise and flooding. The five winning businesses will join a cohort of six teams already working in Hampton Roads from the RISE inaugural 2018 Challenge. RISE will work with these cohorts to pilot their approaches in a "living laboratory" environment across the region, with the goal of building economically viable businesses and solutions that are adaptable to other communities.

In addition to funding, these businesses will get access to other resources from the RISE Resilience Innovation Hub and Testbed. Through these competitions, and the establishment of a resilience hub in Hampton Roads, the region has created opportunities for companies to



use the products and services needed to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Eventually, they would like to see these services used globally.

RISE takes advantage of three unique characteristics in their approach:

1. Offering a living and physical laboratory to test resilience solutions in a coastal community;
2. Ensuring that the innovations they support benefit the community, while also looking for connections to other coastal communities around the world; and
3. Selecting and supporting resilience solutions that are effective, scalable, efficient, and replicable – focusing on achievable results, not just ideas.

To date, RISE has distributed over \$3 million to 11 companies to support the development and demonstration of resilience solutions in Hampton Roads. This funding has created jobs, diversified the economy, and positively affected growing companies.

## Spotlight: Lewis Lawrence, Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission, Commonwealth of Virginia



In this issue of the Resilience Report, we spoke with Lewis Lawrence, Executive Director of the [Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission](#) (MPPDC) in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Lewis has worked for the MPPDC for over 20 years on affecting policy, creating robust programs, and building awareness related to living shorelines and coastal resilience in Middle Peninsula's rural communities. Lewis embodies the crucial role of the MPPDC in collaborating with the Commonwealth, local governments, and communities to promote economic, social, and physical development and ensure the success of the region.

### **Q: Can you tell us about the mission of the MPPDC and where you're located in Virginia?**

**Lewis:** The mission of the MPPDC is to improve public health, safety, convenience, and welfare. In addition, MPPDC provides for the social, economic, and physical development of communities and metropolitan areas of the Commonwealth within a governmental framework and economic environment that fosters constructive growth and efficient administration.

The Middle Peninsula region is located in eastern Virginia and is bordered by the Rappahannock River to the north and the Pamunkey and York Rivers to the south. The MPPDC serves Essex, Gloucester, King and Queen, King William, Mathews, and Middlesex Counties, and the Towns of Tappahannock, Urbanna, and West Point. The region is mainly rural in nature, carved out by numerous waterways, including the Chesapeake Bay.

### **Q: Can you tell us about MPPDC's Living Shorelines Resiliency Program?**

**Lewis:** We have been focused on the Living Shoreline Resiliency Incentive Funding Program. The program is a revolving loan fund that provides homeowners funding and insurance for installation of living shoreline projects on their property. The Middle Peninsula region is unique in having over 1,000 miles of shoreline, and we recognize that everyone living on the shoreline in this region is living with an increased level of risk. To begin mitigating risk, we had to begin affecting policy. Coastal zones in the region face a number of regulatory challenges. We spent a great deal of time working with the General Assembly, Federal, State, and local agencies to update policy to allow for the funding of living shoreline projects. Aside from policy barriers, there were also several challenges we encountered with permitting and design standards when developing this program. There were no engineering design standards for living shorelines in Virginia, and the topic of resiliency as it relates to design had not been considered. Living shorelines were permitted for water quality, not storm protection services. We approached the General Assembly last session to change the policy definition of living shorelines to incorporate wave attenuation and storm surge into the definition. This allowed us to bridge the gap between water quality and resiliency in the upgradient movement of stormwater. We then used FEMA's



Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) to extrapolate design standards into living shoreline projects. The Living Shoreline Resiliency Incentive Funding Program is very much a living document, and it can adapt as the marketplace and consumer preference changes, interest rates change, and even laws change.

**Q: Can you also tell us about the Fight the Flood program you've been working on?**

**Lewis:** Yes – the Fight the Flood program has also been a big focus of MPPDC. Fight the Flood is a much more robust and transformative program when talking about holistically protecting coastal communities. The program exists to help flood-prone property owners access programs and services to better manage challenges posed by flooding. MPPDC started conversations with FEMA and then submitted applications to the Virginia Department of Emergency Management and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation to begin developing the Fight the Flood program. The program creates a marketplace to connect consumers facing flood issues with businesses that have expertise in providing services to help address those challenges. We currently have about a dozen businesses participating in the beta group that are providing these services. The program also connects these individuals to loan funding, grant money, and insurance products to help pay for and insure the project at the same time.

The Fight the Flood program recognizes the need to better secure the tax base of coastal localities; the inherent risk to the delivery of essential governmental services, including public safety, posed by coastal storms and recurrent flooding of all types; and the relationship between at-risk waterfront real estate values and funding of essential governmental services. This public purpose statement is important so that MPPDC will be able to provide grant and loan funds to mitigate flood risk through policy on private waterfront land. The Fight the Flood program's unique creative funding strategy uses resources from the MPPDC revolving loan fund to match grant funding and homeowner investment.

**Q: What kind of education and outreach is being conducted through the MPPDC's coastal resilience efforts?**

**Lewis:** As we defined the living shoreline programs, we quickly learned from homeowners that they don't know who to call to get expert advice, how to access loans for resiliency projects, or how to get grant funding – all while their homes keep flooding as they are trying to figure it all out. The MPPDC is working to close this knowledge gap and provide these resources directly to homeowners and consumers. Educating consumers and homeowners on creative funding strategies and mechanisms has made a difference. We have found that being able to utilize grant funding and reducing loan interest rates has been the tipping point in changing consumer behavior to incentivize them to complete mitigation projects.

**Q: What is the potential impact that these coastal resilience programs and initiatives can make in Virginia's rural coastal communities?**

**Lewis:** A significant focus of the Fight the Flood program is building an industry of resiliency that not only creates a marketplace, but also creates infrastructure to continue fostering growth of policy, programs, and businesses. We are hoping that by building a network of companies that operate in this space and connecting them with consumers, property owners will be able to make better mitigation choices. We are striving to build and foster a water management economy here in the MPPDC region by commercializing marine research and prioritizing coastal resilience. It will be important to continue collaborative efforts with the public and private sectors, as well as universities and programs like Virginia SeaGrant and the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program, to accomplish a holistic approach to this process. Another way to begin achieving this is to work on creating jobs specifically focused on mitigating the effects of sea level rise and other coastal management issues. It is our goal to become a knowledge hub for coastal resilience in the region. Not only can these programs make a significant impact locally, but we are also hoping that what we have built here will inspire others to act on resilience and can serve as a model on a national level.

**Q: Anything else you'd like to share about the MPPDC and its coastal resilience work?**

**Lewis:** I have not found any kind of programs or approach to coastal resilience like this in the country. Our region is building a structured program to deal with real issues that our communities are facing. This was not an overnight process, and it took the MPPDC seven years of drafting and changing state law and policy to create these resilience programs. We hope our work will help protect us from storms today as well as storms tomorrow.

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