

NEWS from the Catskill Watershed Corp

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Flood Hazard Mitigation Implementation funding applications offered

MARGARETVILLE, N.Y. March 16, 2015 – Funding applications will soon be available from the Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC) for a new program designed to help communities take actions to reduce damage from future floods.

The CWC Board of Directors approved the Flood Hazard Mitigation Implementation (FHMI) Program in 2014, and on March 3 authorized applications to be released on April 1. Funding proposals for the first annual round of grants must be submitted by June 1, 2015.

Applications can be obtained at www.cwconline.org, where you can also read the program rules. Questions may be directed to Nate Hendricks, 845-586-1400, Ext. 308.

The program, supported with a \$17 million allocation from the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, pursuant to the 2014 Filtration Avoidance determination, will assist municipalities, businesses and other property owners in the five-county New York City Catskill-Delaware Watershed. It is intended to remedy situations where an imminent and substantial danger to people or property exists; or to improve community-scale flood resilience while providing a water quality benefit.

FHMI is one of several Watershed programs underway or planned that will help communities assess and mitigate conditions that exacerbate flood damage. For more information on these initiatives, visit www.catskillstreams.org.

The focus of the CWC program will be to help pay for projects that will have measurable impacts on flood hazards. Proposed projects, with some significant exceptions, must have been recommended in city-funded Local Flood Analysis (LFA) studies. An LFA is an engineering study that evaluates target areas for flood hazards, and develops mitigation alternatives based on technical feasibility and cost-benefit effectiveness.

Many Watershed municipalities have either completed or are working on LFAs with assistance from the City-funded Stream Management Program through county Soil & Water Conservation Districts and Cornell Cooperative Extension, or, in the case of hamlets that are being assisted through the New York Rising Community Reconstruction Program, by consultants provided by the State.

When these studies are completed, Village and Town governing boards will decide which, if any, recommendations to pursue.

The following types of projects are eligible for funding under the new FHMI program if they are recommended in a community's LFA or equivalent NY Rising study:

- Property protection measures that would contribute to lowering flood waters or reducing damage downstream (such as adding flood vents or breakaway walls to allow water to flow through a basement or crawl space)
- Elimination of sources of manmade pollution (such as relocating or securing fuel tanks)
- Stream-related construction that reduces flood depths
- Alterations to public infrastructure that would lower flood waters or reduce downstream damage, such as enlarging a bridge, or installing floodplain drain b or larger culverts

The FHMI program can also pay some costs associated with relocating certain properties under specific circumstances.

- Municipalities can apply for funds to help relocate a business or a residence where the need for the relocation is identified in the LFA (such as for a flood plain restoration project).
- In communities that have completed an LFA, property owners can apply for funds to help relocate an anchor business outside the floodplain. This would apply to a gas station, grocery store, lumber or hardware store, medical/doctor's office or pharmacy. CWC funds can go towards buying land for relocation within the same town (unless the municipality chooses to waive this requirement). Funds for feasibility or environmental studies, appraisal costs or for providing wastewater treatment at the new site are also available.
- In communities that have completed an LFA, property owners can apply for funds to help relocate critical community facilities (firehouse, school, town hall, water or wastewater treatment system) which if damaged or destroyed would immediately impair the health and/or safety of a community. Funds for buying land outside the flood plain, for conducting feasibility or environmental studies, or for providing wastewater infrastructure are also available.
- Individual homeowners and businesses who participate in the NYC DEP Flood Buyout (FBO) Program anywhere in the Watershed (not just within an LFA community) may apply to CWC for relocation assistance. Homeowners are eligible to seek up to \$10,000 towards a wastewater treatment solution for a single family residence at a new location within the same Town. Businesses may apply for funds to help purchase land outside the floodplain, for feasibility and environmental studies, for appraisal costs and for up to \$50,000 for wastewater infrastructure at a new site within the same Town.

The parameters of the City's FBO program are being finalized but are expected to require that applicant properties be at risk of loss or damage by inundation, erosion or slope failure, or are needed for stream or floodplain restoration work.

Municipalities can also apply for up to \$20,000 to pay for planning for a Planned Redevelopment Community to replace residences recommended for relocation in an LFA. Grants up to \$250,000 are also available to help pay for wastewater infrastructure for such planned communities. Under a separate CWC program, municipalities can receive funds to update or develop comprehensive plans to identify areas suitable for relocated residences and businesses.

The CWC's program also offers grants up to \$10,000 per property to municipalities and property owners for emergency stream debris removal after a storm.

Projects ineligible for CWC funding include structural flood control practices such as flood walls, berms and levees; stream dredging or channelization or maintenance projects, the need for which has occurred more than once because of flooding.

The CWC is a non-profit, Local Development Corporation responsible for several environmental protection, economic development and education programs in the New York City Watershed West of the Hudson River. Visit www.cwconline.org for more information.

