

WOLOSKI PARK
FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Middleborough Conservation and Planning Departments are working with the Board of Selectmen, Town Manager and the Local Emergency Management Committee (LEPC) to facilitate the purchase and removal of a number of flood prone homes at the confluence of the Taunton River and Purchase Brook in a community named "Woloski Park". The homes would be demolished by the Town and the land would be restricted as permanently protected open space. The total project cost is anticipated to be \$1,075,000 and this application to the CPC is for the Town's share of \$161,088, which is 15% of the project.

The Town of Middleborough is in receipt of a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) award of \$752,824 (75% of \$1,003,765) for Woloski Park. There is a 25% local match that will be split between The Nature Conservancy and the Town. The Town, working through the LEPC and Town Manager applied for this grant in April 2011 after the catastrophic 2010 flooding, but did not qualify to receive the award, until our Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) was updated and approved by MEMA and FEMA; final HMP approval was received from FEMA on November 5, 2015. The Board of Selectmen have voted to accept the grant and the contract was signed on 1/12/16

The Town of Middleborough's HMGP grant is for the buyout of 9 of the 10 homes at Woloski Park, which are not only located in the 100 year flood plain of the Taunton River, but the access road to Woloski Park crosses the Purchase Brook which floods the road, making it impassable by vehicle for any flood event exceeding the 2 year flood. Buyout and removal of these homes would not only benefit the homeowners, but would also greatly benefit the Town's emergency responders who are required to expend inordinate amounts of time and resources responding to emergencies and evacuation of this small riverside community. The HMGP grant is a 75%/25% reimbursable grant with the 25% local match borne by the Town and The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Since the grant application in 2011, the economy has rebounded somewhat and two of the homes have sold for significantly higher amounts than the estimated values in 2011. As a result, we have raised the expected project cost to \$1,075,000. FEMA will not raise the grant award at the present time but will entertain a request for an increase to cover 75% of any budget over run, once the project is completed, although there are no guarantees. Additionally, The MA Department of Fish and Game is interested in purchasing the properties once demolition is complete. The value wouldn't be very high as the land will be restricted as not buildable, however they may be able to reimburse for the appraisals and Phase I Hazardous Material inspections after the fact.

The Town would like to be purchasing all 10 residential properties at Woloski Park; however it is a voluntary program and only 9 of the 10 homeowners have signed Voluntary Participation Forms, which means that they are willing to go through the process and entertain an offer for the purchase of their property. These offers would be based on full fair market appraisals and a property owner could challenge theirs, all in accordance with the FEMA Guidelines. In the end an owner makes the decision whether to accept the final offer and sign a P&S or to decline at that point. It is definitely in the Town's interest to acquire as many of these properties as possible and increasing the Project funds beyond the initial 2011 FEMA grant value helps us to do that..