

# **Ben Hill County Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan**

## **Chapter 7**

### **I. Conclusion Summary**

The definition of mitigate is "...to relieve; to alleviate; to temper." Natural hazards cannot be prevented; technological hazards, despite rigorous laws and regulations, are still going to occur. However, with proper planning, the destruction that often accompanies a hazard event can be mitigated. Planning ahead and undertaking structural and nonstructural action steps before a disaster occurs can save lives and property. This philosophy has been the driving force behind the preparation of the Ben Hill County Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan.

Ben Hill County and its municipalities have suffered considerable repetitive damages due primarily to localized flooding. Hurricanes, tornadoes and severe thunderstorms have affected Ben Hill County. Very strong winds have caused damage in Ben Hill County in the past and continue to threaten Ben Hill County. In addition, heavy rains from thunderstorms can create damaging flooding. Because of a favorable outdoor environment, several individuals each year are struck by lightning; large numbers are affected by extreme heat and cold. Ben Hill County's location on many major trucking routes makes it vulnerable to accidents resulting in hazardous materials release.

Education of the population and enhanced warning can decrease the vulnerability of the county's citizens and visitors. Continued and improved public information and communication with the population are important parts of this plan.

Several gaps exist in our understanding of the threats facing Ben Hill County. These include a lack of understanding of the effect of drought on the subsurface water supply and the impact of historically high river flood levels. Efforts to refine our understanding are included in this plan.

Because of this planning process, Ben Hill County officials have gained a better understanding of the hazards affecting our county. The National Weather Service data, recently made readily available on the internet, was very helpful in this planning effort.

As a result of the planning process described in Chapter 1 and the natural/technological hazard, risk, and vulnerability assessments in Chapters 2 and 3, Ben Hill County and its municipalities now have a much more realistic perspective on the hazards that the county is exposed to everyday. And with the mitigation strategy outlined in Chapters 4 and 5 and the implementation plan included in Chapter 6, the local leaders of Ben Hill County and Fitzgerald now have an "action plan" to follow when allocating resources to reduce their communities' vulnerability to such hazards.

## II. References

Numerous reference materials were used in the preparation of the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan.

### A. Publications:

- Publications – Fitzgerald Herald Leader
- Ben Hill County Local Emergency Operation Plan
- FEMA State and Local Mitigation Planning how-to guides
- OHS-GEMA Supplements to FEMA how-to guides
- Ben Hill County Comprehensive Plan
- U.S. Census Bureau
- South Georgia Regional Plan
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources
- Georgia Forestry Commission
- Georgia Tornado Database
- National Climatic Data Base
- National Weather Service
- USDA Farm Services Agency

### B. Web Sites:

- U.S. Department of Transportation ([www.hazmat.dot.gov](http://www.hazmat.dot.gov))
- Georgia Department of Transportation ([www.dot.state.ga.us](http://www.dot.state.ga.us))
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) ([www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov))
- FEMA ([www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov))
- OHS-GEMA ([www.gema.state.ga.us](http://www.gema.state.ga.us))
- American Red Cross ([www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org))