FLOODPLAIN BUYOUTS
ADVANTAGES OF BUYOUTS

Saves money
- debris removal, evacuation, search and rescue, ...

Provides permanent protection

Serves multiple objectives
- risk reduction, open space,
- habitat, recreation

Enhances natural buffers

Protects private property rights
DISADVANTAGES OF BUYOUTS

Expensive, particularly for coastal communities
Loss of tax base
Disruption of established neighborhoods
Incomplete participation
Could lead to higher housing costs (constrains land markets)
FLOODPLAIN BUYOUTS

What happens to acquired properties?

Are there opportunities for projects that provide multiple benefits (habitat, community amenities, resilience)?
Restrictions and Compatible Uses

Restrictions (44 CFR § 80.19)- Uses and activities that are generally prohibited include:

- walled buildings
- commercial inventory storage (e.g., automobiles)
- cemeteries
- levees, dikes, or floodwalls
- paved roads, highways, bridges, or paved parking
- landfills and storage of hazardous or toxic materials
- above or below ground pumping or switching stations
- above or below ground storage tanks
- off-site fill uses that obstruct the natural and beneficial functions of the floodplain

Compatible uses - The “compatible uses” which are allowed on the property present a wide range of opportunities for communities. In general, permissible “open space” uses include:

- nature preserves
- outdoor recreation
- cultivation or grazing
- buffer zones
- camping (where there is adequate warning time to allow evacuation)
MANAGEMENT
# Management Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option 1: Patchwork</th>
<th>Option 2: Holdouts</th>
<th>Option 3: Comprehensive</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Map from the Clyde, NC Case Study. HMGGP acquired parcels are labeled in green.</td>
<td>Detail from the Rocky Mount, NC Case Study. The pink shading shows the location of holdouts among HMGGP acquired parcels labeled in green.</td>
<td>Detail from the East Grand Forks, MN Case Study. The red line delineates one of several contiguous acquisitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Option for use:</em> Clyde leases some of the parcels to local neighbors for low-risk uses including community gardens.</td>
<td><em>Option for use:</em> Rocky Mount has created trails and other amenities, including a dog park and barbeque pavilion on the parts of the buyout that don’t interfere with the remaining residents.</td>
<td><em>Option for use:</em> East Grand Forks has created parks and used portions of the buyout for habitat restoration and connectivity.</td>
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</table>
RECREATION

Examples from Minnesota and North Carolina.
WI – JEFFERSON CO. AND PIERCE CO.
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The City of Cuyahoga Falls, OH
MAKING THE MOST OF FLOODPLAIN BUYOUTS

www.eli.org/land-biodiversity/floodplain-buyouts

Funding: McKnight Foundation, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, New York Community Trust
WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED...

Variation in management of sites

Opportunities to restore

Many challenges
  ▪ Obstacles in finding willing property owners
  ▪ Funding
  ▪ Patchwork distribution
  ▪ Other site conditions (e.g., existing infrastructure)
  ▪ Capacity
CHALLENGES/CONSIDERATIONS

HOW DO I FUND A RESTORATION PROJECT?

HOW DO I FUND MORE ACQUISITIONS?

WHAT ABOUT MAINTENANCE?

WHAT TO DO WITH EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES?

HOW DO I GET BUY-IN FROM NEIGHBORS?

HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT PARTNERS?

HOW DO I PRIORITIZE FUTURE BUYOUTS?
FINANCING AND INCENTIVES

Acquiring Properties
- Providing the Non-Federal Match
- Funding Buyouts
- Incentives

Funding Restoration/Management
THE CITY OF NORTH ROYALTON, OH

Plantings done by the West Creek Conservancy and Cuyahoga Soil and Water.
THE CITY OF FAIRFIELD, OH

Honor Grove & Boys Scout’s Overlook
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public Participation for Buyout Planning & Management: A step-by-step online guide

Floodplain acquisitions allow local governments to move people out of harm's way and reduce the risk of future structural damage and associated disaster recovery costs in the flood-prone area. Once properties are acquired and structures are removed, communities can also benefit by converting acquired land to parks and other community amenities or restoring ecosystems for water quality, flood resilience, and habitat benefits. Well-planned opportunities for public participation in the planning, implementation, and maintenance of post-acquisition projects on floodplain buyout properties can strengthen the project, secure community buy-in, and lead to strategic partnerships that can improve long-term success. A well-planned process will instill a sense of accountability between the local government agency managing the buyout sites and the community based on a common understanding of feasibility and context.

We developed a five-step outline for organizing public participation in the floodplain buyout process based on research and our experiences with pilot projects in Iowa, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The steps in this guide will help local governments solicit community feedback on post-acquisition management projects. Recognizing that different communities may be at different stages of the floodplain acquisition process, however, the steps can be carried out at different points in the floodplain buyout process: In preparation of hazard mitigation funding becoming available (e.g., proactively to ensure the community can be strategic about how to target mitigation funding); while acquisition programs are being carried out (when community interest may be highest); or after a buyout that leaves space available for projects compatible with allowable uses (sometimes this occurs many years after the buyout).

1. Gather Information & Set Scope
2. Make a Plan for Outreach
3. Conduct Outreach and Host Event
4. Synthesize and Incorporate Community Input
5. Communicate Outcomes
MAKING THE MOST OF FLOODPLAIN BUYOUTS IN OTTAWA
MAKING THE MOST OF FLOODPLAIN BUYOUTS IN CHEROKEE
MAKING THE MOST OF FLOODPLAIN BUYOUTS IN JEFFERSON COUNTY
(1) identifying goals for community use of the properties that will help set a context for a prioritization process;  
(2) selecting relevant criteria to target future acquisition resources and potential data sources for each criterion; and 
(3) developing a prioritization plan.
QUESTIONS
## Property Transfer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conservation easements</th>
<th>Title transfers</th>
<th>Property leases</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• May be used by land trusts or other qualified* conservation groups that serve as stewards or monitors of a property</td>
<td>• Under HMGP rules and with FEMA Regional Administrator approval, property interest may be transferred to public entities or conservation non-profits</td>
<td>• To a public or private entity or individual</td>
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<td>• Allows specialized agency or organization to coordinate necessary efforts</td>
<td>• May help community leverage other sources of funding for a project of interest</td>
<td>• Community can retain ownership while other entity uses it, but potential new user may feel more secure in right to use property and willing to invest resources</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Especially useful if adjacent land already belongs to recipient entity</td>
<td>• Use must still be consistent with open space deed restrictions</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Owner does not need to receive market value for lease</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Qualified conservation groups include land trusts, environmental organizations, and similar entities recognized by law as able to hold legal interests in land.