

CHAPTER ONE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction and Background

Like all counties throughout Florida, the communities of Marion County are vulnerable to a wide range of natural and technological disasters, as demonstrated by the very high human and economic costs of the events that recently impacted the northern portion of the state. To address this vulnerability, the Marion County Working Group for Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) Development was created in July 1998. The Working Group includes representatives of County agencies and municipal governments, key community groups and private sector organizations. It has the responsibility to develop a comprehensive plan, or "*Strategy*" to eliminate or minimize the impacts of future disasters. The effort to eliminate or minimize the impacts of future disasters is often termed "*hazard mitigation*." Its key purpose is to identify the projects and programs that would be implemented to reduce the impacts of future disasters as resources to do so become available. These proposed projects and programs are termed "*mitigation initiatives*."

The Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA) provided a grant to Marion County, and any County municipality that desired to participate, in this planning process. Including Unincorporated Marion County, all municipalities, have joined the LMS process and are members of the Working Group. These include the City of Ocala, City of Dunnellon, and the City of Belleview. The Towns of Reddick and McIntosh elected to not participate in the 2004 LMS program, however since 2004, both jurisdictions have been active members in the LMS process. Other participants in the Working Group to date include Marion County School Board, Office of Emergency Management, American Red Cross, Ocala Economic Development Council, and Ocala Electric Utility.

The Working Group is a partnership of local governments, community organizations, and prominent elements of the private sector working together to make the communities of Marion County more resistant to the damages of future disasters.

This document combines appropriate parts of the prior versions of the update of the Local Mitigation Strategy, based on the planning accomplished by the Working Group, and is a report to the community, to local officials, and to the DEO. The 1999 document was originally prepared by Emergency Response Planning & Management, Inc., consultant to the County assisting with development of the Strategy. The Withlacoochee Regional Planning Council wrote the 2004 LMS update and Marion County Growth Management Department staff members authored the 2010, 2015 and the 2020 updates.

The Chapters of this document provide information regarding the efforts to date of the Working Group. They summarize the analyses to identify hazards threatening the County and define how communities are vulnerable to those hazards. It also provides a list of the program proposals or projects that were developed to eliminate or minimize identified vulnerabilities.

The protocol that the Working Group will follow, upon approval by FEMA, includes requesting the governing bodies review the Strategy, and take action to adopt or endorse the Strategy. The Strategy will continue to be updated every five years and used in future years as a guide for planning, funding and developing the proposals listed in it. The Working Group's efforts were initiated with the identification of the goals and objectives that should be used to shape the Strategy. The Working Group chose to focus on protecting the citizens of Marion County from natural and man-made disasters, including hurricanes, wildfire, and hazardous materials incidents.

Strategy Development Highlights

Activities of the Working Group are overseen by a Steering Committee of formally designated representatives of the participants; the planning effort itself was originally conducted through four Subcommittees: Public Affairs, Financial Issues, Mitigation Planning and Risk Assessment. Currently, these subcommittees only meet on a as need basis.

The Working Group has defined, adopted, and initiated a step-by-step planning process designed to determine the actions needed to reduce impacts of future disasters. Using this information, the planning participants have proposed numerous projects to eliminate or minimize these vulnerabilities. These proposed mitigation initiatives will be incorporated into the Strategy for implementation as resources become available. The list presented in this document will continue to change as the Strategy is updated and projects are approved.

In addition, the relevant existing plans, policies and codes of the local governments in Marion County have been assessed in the magnitude of the potentials hazards confronting the County. Based on the findings of these analyses, proposals for enhancements will continue to be considered for development and incorporation into the Strategy. Further, the Working Group will continue to investigate past disasters that impacted Marion County. These events often clearly illustrate the types of "mitigation initiatives" that should be considered for incorporation into the Strategy.

The "mitigation initiatives" that are identified as needed based on these analyses are proposed by each of the planning participants, and then coordinated by the Working Group to ensure that potential inter-jurisdictional impacts or conflicts, or duplication of initiatives, can be avoided. In addition to defining needed "mitigation initiatives," the Working Group, primarily through their own individual organizations, will continue to provide information to the public about the planning process and to obtain input to update the Strategy.

Contents of the Document

The Strategy provides information both describing activities of the Working Group and results of its planning. The Administrative Section provides administrative information regarding the Working Group activities in developing the Strategy. It consists of the bylaws and procedures by which the organization operates, as well as explaining the development and processing of mitigation initiatives for incorporation into the Strategy.

The document contains information that will be common to all participants. Then, each local jurisdiction is provided with its own separate portion of the Strategy for its use. This reflects the Working Group's policy that each local jurisdiction and organization must make its own decisions regarding the mitigation initiatives it wishes to implement, as well as the priorities that they should be given. The proposed mitigation initiatives listed in this document have been reviewed and coordinated by the Working Group.

As previously mentioned, the findings of this planning have resulted in multiple proposals, or mitigation initiatives, to be incorporated into the Strategy. As the Strategy is updated, this list will continue to grow and change, as additional information becomes available. The Working Group will continue to build on the foundation of the Strategy by updating, modifying and expanding the list of proposed mitigation initiatives and seeking to initiate them. In future years with this type of ongoing effort, the vulnerability of Marion County to the human and economic impact of disasters will continue to decrease.

Public Involvement

Since the first LMS meeting, persons representing the public and private sector have joined and contributed to the work of the Working Group's four subcommittees and the Steering Committee to observe the development of the plan. As the process continues to move forward, in future years it is hoped that representation will increase and participation will be evident in a number of initiatives and public support. The participation rate in the LMS has seen a rise and fall primarily based on the existence of a threat or the occurrence of a threat in the preceding months. Public participation measures will include:

- Public Workshop - At a minimum, there will be one public workshop held after the completion of the draft Plan and prior to the plan's approval in order to solicit formal public comments on the LMS document.
- Public Hearings – City and County Commission Meetings. Municipal representatives, or the Public Affairs Subcommittee from the Working Group, will provide progress reports to City and County Board of Commissioners.

- Website - The Working Group posted the LMS document and related information on the Marion County website to further involve neighboring communities, local and regional agencies and other interested participants in the LMS update process. Any suggestions or comments pertaining to the LMS document may be e-mailed or faxed to the Marion County Planning Division.

Additionally, neighboring communities, local and regional agencies involved in hazard mitigation activities, agencies that have authority to regulate development, businesses, academia, other private interests and non-profit organizations were invited and encouraged to actively participate in the planning process and were included in all of the meeting announcements and LMS notices.

In early 2020, members of the Marion County Working Group and Steering Committee for Local Mitigation Strategy were contacted to participate in the 2020 LMS update. The Steering Committee has met regularly since the initial adoption of the document, many of the Working Group members were active in keeping the mitigation initiatives current. For the 2020 LMS update meeting, a memorandum was sent to public and private sector organizations. Representatives from the business community, elected officials, academia, business associations, homeowner and neighborhood organizations, civic organizations, local residents and neighboring counties were invited to attend the meeting and encouraged to participate in the Marion County LMS update. The Working Group membership list is shown in Table I-1.

Changes within the 2020 Update

The LMS staff has reviewed each section of the 2015 LMS plan (planning process, risk assessment, mitigation strategy, and plan maintenance) for consistency with updated LMS plan requirements. The review consisted of identifying updated plan requirements as appropriate; necessary data changes for hazards and maps; and other necessary plan maintenance based on the experience of the Working Group members. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, update process interviews were not individually conducted with key agency representatives or citizens. Instead, surveys were crafted for the general public and stakeholders to solicit input on hazard mitigation issues, development trends, and potential new data sources.

Planning Process

No major updates were identified for the planning process.

Demographic and Population Trends

An estimated population increase of 11.1% (36,832 individuals) has occurred in Marion County between

2010 and 2020. Marion County is been experiencing significant increases in both commercial and residential construction permitting. Much of the single-family residential construction is contained within existing platted subdivisions while increases in commercial development is prevalent in areas of infill development. During the 2010-2016 time period, permits issued for single family residential housing averaged 762 permits per year, but gradually increased every year.

Risk Assessment

After review of the 2015 LM Plan, it was determined that the hazards identified in the existing plan remained valid for the update. However, there were significant changes in the data collected related to each of the hazards including utilization of the latest FEMA HAZUS-MH model. Updated data was generated for identified hazards included in the plan. Additionally, the list of critical facilities was also updated to reflect the development that has occurred in the County in the previous 5 years. For ease of reference, many of the larger tables were relocated in an appendix section at the end of the document.

Mitigation Strategy

Goals include continued demonstration of participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by providing a current list of repetitive loss properties, a general description of NFIP compliance and participation in the Community Rating System (CRS), and providing a map of flood prone areas in the County provided by the Marion County Stormwater Division. Recent changes include updating more recent iterations of the Mitigation Project list by adding projected costs, potential funding sources and agency/ municipal department source for each project and participating in the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECFRPC) Resiliency Collaborative. While Marion County is technically not a formal member of the Collaborative at this time, Marion County staff have been attending meetings and working with ECFRPC staff in order to lay the groundwork to join.

Plan Maintenance

Minor changes included updating the Working Group Membership List and contact information. The Marion County Mitigation Program Responsibilities spreadsheet is shown in Table I-2. It shows the program area and the jurisdiction that is responsible for those mitigation projects. This does not limit these jurisdictions to only one specific type of project.

WORKING GROUP STEERING COMMITTEE - VOTING MEMBERSHIP

Marion County BCC

Ken McCann	MC Fire Marshal	2631 SE 3 rd Street	352-291-8000	ken.mccann@marionfl.org
Bart Walker	Fire Rescue Deputy Chief	Ocala, FL 34471		bart.walker@marionfl.org

City of Belleview

Shawna Chancey	Development Services Dir.	5343 S.E. Abshier Blvd. Belleview, FL 34420	352-233-2107	schancey@belleviewfl.org
Bruce Phillips	Belleview Pub Wks Dir./ Eng.		352-233-2110	bphillips@belleviewfl.org
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City of Dunnellon

Chef McQuaig	Community Development/ <i>Code Enforcement</i>	20750 River Drive Dunnellon, FL 34431	352-465-8500 c=(352)322-3993	mmcquaig@dunnellonpd.org temp duties
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City of Ocala

Sean Lanier, PE, CFM (Vice Chair)	City of Ocala, Public Works Department	1805 NE 30th Ave, Bld 600 Ocala, FL 34470	352-351-6763	slanier@Ocalafl.org
Larry Doerffel	Ocala Fire Rescue	3001 NE 21 Street, Ocala, FL 34470	352 629-8306	LDoerffel@ocalafl.org

Marion County Sheriff/Emergency Management

Erin Miller (Chair)	EM Assistant Director	P.O. Box 1987 Ocala, FL 34478-1987	352-369-8120 Erin	emiller@marionso.com
Preston Bowlin -(James)	EM Director		352-369-8185 Prest	jbowlin@marionso.com

Marion County School Board

"Chris" Terrance Smith	Risk Assessment Mgr	Ocala, FL 34474	352-671-6910	Terrance.Smith@marion.k12.fl.us
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Ocala/Marion County Chamber and Economic Partnership (CEP)

Kevin Sheilley Tamara Fleischhaker	CEP, Bus Advocacy	310 SE 3rd Street Ocala, FL 34471	352-629-8051x105 k 352-629-8051 x102 t	tamara@ocalacep.com
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Ocala/Marion County Assoc. of Realtors/Building Industry Association (Alternating Seat - Odd Year = BOR, Even Year = BIA)				
Ocala/Marion County Assoc. of Realtors				
Randy Alvord	MCBOR President	3105 NE 14th Street	352-572-1739	randy.alvord@omcar.com
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Building Industry Association				
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Non-Profit				
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				-
County Resident #1				
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County Resident #2				
Beth Nelson	Citizen	P.O. Box 165 McIntosh, FL 32664	352-519-9480	townofmcintosh@windstream.net
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MARION COUNTY
LOCAL MITIGATION STRATEGY
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		Ocala, FL 34471		
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Town of Reddick				
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Florida Forestry				
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Regional Organizations				
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Table I-2 Marion County Mitigation Program Responsibilities

Program Area Jurisdiction	Flood/Storm Water	Roads/Transport.	Water/Sewer	HazMat/Haz Waste Disposal	Pollution Control	Planning	Bldg./LU Code	Utilities Elec., Fuel, Comm.	Victim Support (Food)	Emergency Services	Cable TV
Marion Co.	Engineering Dept.	Engineering & Roads	Utility Dept.	Solid Waste Fire/Rescue	County F/R, Eng. & DEP	Growth Services Dept.	Building & PZ Dept.	City of Ocala, Clay, Teco, FP	Private	Sheriff, F/R, EM, Hospital	Diverse
Ocala	Co. Eng. Dept.	Co. Eng./Ocala Public Works	Water & Sewer Div.	Public Works Fire/Rescue	Co. Eng. Div. DEP	City Planning Dept.	Building & PZ Dept.	City of Ocala, Teco,	Private	Police Dept., F/R, Hospital	Diverse
Bellevue	Public Works	Public Works	Public Works	Public Works County F/R	Co. Eng. Div. DEP	City Planning Dept.	Building Dept. & County	Sprint	Private		
Dunnellon	Public Works	Public Works	Public Works	Public Works County F/R	Co. Eng. Div. DEP	RPC	Building Dept. & County	FP, Sumter, Sprint	Private (Amer.Red Cross)	Police, Co. F/R, EMS	Diverse
McIntosh	Co. Eng. Dept.	Co. Eng./Roads	Water (contract)	County Fire/Rescue	Co. Eng. Div. DEP	RPC	Co. Building Dept.	FP, Sprint	Private (Amer.Red Cross)	Police, Co. F/R, EMS	Diverse
SJRWMD	Yes	Yes	Water	Wellhead	Wellhead/Water	LU Control &	No	FP, Clay, Alltel	Private (Amer.Red Cross)	County	Diverse
SWFWMD	Yes	Yes	Water Withdrawal	Wellhead Protection	Wellhead/Water Quality	LU Control & Comment	No	No	No	No	No
State Forests & US	DEO/DOT	DOT	DEP Withdrawal	DEP Protection	DEP Quality	DEO Comment	DEO	No	No	No	No
Man. Housing & US Forests Assoc. Man. Housing	DEO	No	No	No Fire/Rescue	No	DEO	No	No	No	FHP	No
Insurance Industry Assoc.	Agents	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Insurance Industry	Agents	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

Legend

Co. = County	Eng. = Engineering
DEO = Department of Economic Opportunity	FHP = Florida Highway Patrol
DEP = Department of Environmental Protection	FP = Florida Power
DEM = Department of Emergency Management	F/R = Fire/Rescue
DOT = Department of Transportation	LU = Land Use
EM = Emergency Management	PZ = Planning & Zoning
EMS = Emergency Medical Service	RPC = Regional Planning Council