



NORTHWEST OHIO

Flood Mitigation Partnership, INC.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why don't we just...?

Build one big retention pond east of Findlay?

- An effective retention pond would have to cover 1 square mile and be more than 60 ft. deep.
- During the August 2007 flood approximately 82 billion gallons of water passed through Findlay—more than 10 times what the reservoir holds!
- Consideration is being given to building several small ponds.

Dredge the river out two feet and reduce the flood level by two feet?

- Dredging the river two feet will not reduce the flood stage by two feet.
- The added capacity gained by dredging two feet of the river bottom at its normal width of 150 feet is insignificant compared to the quantity of water in the river when it is at flood stage – one half to one mile wide in spots.
- Dredging is also a temporary solution. Sediment removed ultimately will redevelop in a relatively short time.

Divert excess flood waters to an abandoned stone quarry?

- Would require building channels, storm sewers, pumping stations, buying property and rights of way.
- Pumping to quarries would only benefit downstream of the quarries. All the flooded areas along Eagle Creek, Lye Creek and east Findlay would remain.
- Would require a dozen quarries (80 acres and 40 feet of storage) to hold the 82 billion gallons.

Dig small retention ponds in local neighborhoods?

- Would only hold storm water from the City of Findlay and only help flash floods.
- Would not address the water coming into Findlay from the south and the east.
- Would have to be dry ponds (empty holes – resulting in esthetic as well as safety concerns) to have storage capacity.
- Cost would outweigh the benefit of their small impact.

Install flood levees?

- Flood levees may be part of an overall solution.
- Levees require special consideration of effects on other areas.
- Levees can cause contractions or restrictions in the river that do not exist now, causing flooding in new areas, particularly east of Findlay.
- Storm sewers would have to be pumped over the flood walls.
- Would require building pump stations throughout the city.
- Flood levees also require temporary flood walls at all the bridges.

Is development the cause of flooding?

Despite the development, the amount of rainfall it takes to cause a flood has not changed in 50 years

- February 1959, 3.14 inches of rain - river rose to 16.76 feet.
- February 2008, 3.38 inches of rain - river rose to 16.50 feet.
- Only 6% of the watershed is urban, not all developed.
- 94.1% of the rain falls on cropland, and finds its way to the Blanchard River and its tributaries.

How can we help?

- Understand that the process takes time, but we are committed to seeing it through.
- Remind your legislators that we need to work together to keep this project moving forward.
- Public contributions are being accepted through The Findlay-Hancock County Community Foundation to support planning, design and construction.

What Has Been Done

- Since 1871, six reports have been written on flood control.
- The US Army Corps of Engineers (USCAE) reports (1962 for Findlay and 1964 for Ottawa) recommended that a federal project be authorized. Findlay accepted the USACE's recommendation and in 1963 the USCAE sent a request to Congress. It is unknown why nothing was done. Ottawa declined the federal government's recommendation in 1963 and for financial reasons, declined again in 1987.



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- Four rain and stream flow gauges were added in Fall 2007 to forewarn residents to protect moveable property. Residents can review data from the gauges at <http://www.ci.findlay.oh.us/?id=194>.
- The City of Findlay and USGS implemented an Early Warning System using the stream gauge data and National Weather Service to more accurately predict river levels and flood mapping. This is the first such system in Ohio.
- Ottawa developed a "Comprehensive Stormwater Plan" that resulted in \$11 million in storm water improvements since 1990. All new construction within the Village is required to incorporate this plan, which was updated in 2007.
- Began property acquisitions using state and federal grant and city funds. The demolition of these "at-risk" properties, converting them to green space, will allow for more flood storage capacity inside the floodplain.
- Ottawa obtained a "Class 9" rating from the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Community Rating System. Citizens to receive a 5 percent reduction in flood insurance rates.
- Findlay subdivision regulations were updated to require increased storm water retention for new developments in the flood plain.
- Ottawa requires all new subdivisions, commercial and industrial structures, without exception, to incorporate into their design plans the parameters of the Village's stormwater plan.
- Liberty Street Dam was lowered in 2006 to have more volume capacity inside its normal channel to take additional flood waters.
- Hancock and Putnam counties each received and are implementing \$1 million grant for cleaning up debris and removing log jams in the Blanchard River and its tributaries.
- URS and USACE completed a review of the Findlay 62 and Ottawa 64 studies for feasibility in current land use.

What We Know About A Solution

- A permanent solution to this problem is a long-term issue - 3 to 5 years to develop and implement a viable solution.
- The solution will be expensive. Findlay's portion of a flood solution could be in excess of \$50 million. A separate amount will be needed for the Village of Ottawa.
- Must be approved by US Army Corps of Engineers and appropriated by Congress for federal funding of up to 65% of the cost of construction.

About The Northwest Ohio Flood Mitigation Partnership

- A private/non-profit organization whose purpose is to expedite the design and development of a flood mitigation plan.
- Implemented in coordination with responsible public authorities in the Blanchard River Watershed.
- Working with consultants, local government, the Blanchard River Watershed Partnership, the Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, state and federal legislators.
- Findlay, Ottawa, Putnam County, Hancock and Allen County officials signed resolutions endorsing the Partnership's efforts. The group hopes to have an agreement soon with Hardin County and Bluffton officials.
- Developing a feasibility study with Army Corps could take 24-31 months.
- Assisting local governments in keeping federal legislator attention on the issue.
- Determining a funding plan for construction.

What We're Dealing With

Blanchard River Watershed

- Covers nearly 771 square miles, approximately half is upstream of Findlay.
- Forms in Hardin County and includes Hancock, Allen, Wyandot, Putnam and Paulding Counties.
- Hancock County makes up 49.2 percent of the entire watershed while Putnam County is the second largest at 24.2 percent.
- Receives approximately 36 inches of annual rainfall.
- 70 percent of the flow during the 100-year storm enters the river east of Findlay and a large part of the remaining 30 percent is added by Eagle and Lye Creeks.
- 80 percent of the watershed is cropland.

The Blanchard River

- Normal flow rate is approximately 1,000 gallons per second.
- The rate is up to 37,000 gallons per second before it reaches flood stage.
- During the August 2007 flood, the rate was 116,700 gallons per second.
- The Blanchard River is predominantly flat with more than 83 percent of the land at less than a 2 percent slope.

Flooding

- The largest flood occurred in March 1913 when 92 inches of rain fell in a 4-day period; exceeded the 500-year flood.
- August 2007 was 2nd largest recorded.
- *The term a "100-year flood," means that there is a 1 percent chance that a "100-year flood" could happen in any given year.*

For more information, visit our website at www.floodpartnership.org