The Purpose of the Plan

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) is a federally-sponsored program (through FEMA) that provides grants to States and localities to implement hazard mitigation measures after a major disaster declaration has been made, with the purpose of reducing loss of life and property in the event of a future natural disaster. As a result of several storm events, Gloucester County has been eligible to participate in the HMGP. The County has applied for, and been awarded, grant funding following widespread damage from Isabel, Ernesto, Gaston, “Nor’Ida,” and the winter storms of 2009-2010. These grants allow for the elevation of structures or the acquisition of flood-prone properties as long-term solutions that, in the long run, save more money than the cost of the grant. The HMGP program stipulates that properties purchased through the HMGP must be maintained as open space in perpetuity; Open Space may consist of any legally protected parcel or area of land and water that is devoted to:

- The preservation of natural resources;
- The managed production of resources (forest and farm land, including the cultivation of crops and grazing of animals);
- Outdoor recreation
- Preservation of historic and cultural property;
- Protection of scenic landscapes;
- Protection of public health, safety, and welfare.

Having an Open Space Management Plan is a requirement associated with the County’s Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), which mitigates recurring property damage claims due to flooding in low lying areas. The Open Space Hazard Mitigation Management Plan is part of a larger Flood Plain Ordinance which has been adopted by the County. Open space protected through the HMGP will also be considered as part of a larger, countywide view of open space resources in the County’s Comprehensive Plan.

Participation in the HMGP is voluntary; while certain areas may be at higher risk and therefore present a higher priority when properties are evaluated, individual properties are not targeted for acquisition. The site-specific acquisition process starts (and ends) with a decision by the property owner. Under the HMGP, once acquired, any structures on the property must be removed or demolished and septic tanks must be crushed/filled. The property must be maintained (in perpetuity) for the approved open space purposes listed above and used in a way that is not inconsistent with the natural functions of the floodplain. This Plan represents the County’s plan for the management of thirty-four properties; some with residential houses which have been or will be demolished per the terms of the HMGP, and undeveloped properties that will remain in their natural state.
The acquisition of properties located in the floodplain must meet the requirements of preserving open space listed above; and under the terms of the HMGP, the participating locality must have an individual plan for each property it purchases with grant funding. Acquisition of property through this program provides the following benefits to the community:

- Eliminates private property damage and prevents loss of life through the voluntary removal of residential homes from the county's most flood-prone areas;
- Preserves and protects wetlands, which provide many ecological benefits - including:
  - Providing food and other products—such as commercial fish and shellfish—for human use.
  - Providing fish and wildlife—including numerous rare and endangered species—food habitat, breeding grounds, and resting areas.
  - Protecting stream banks and shorelines from erosion.
  - Reducing the severity of floods downstream by retaining water and releasing it during drier periods.
  - Recharging groundwater, potentially reducing water shortages during dry spells.
  - Improving water quality by breaking down, removing, using, or retaining nutrients, organic waste, and sediment carried to the wetland with stormwater runoff from the watershed.
- Creates opportunities for wetland restoration and migration;
- Provides educational and research opportunities for local schools and colleges;
- Provides land for future recreation opportunities for County residents and visitors.
  - Parks
    - Boat Launches
    - Playgrounds
  - Picnic Areas / Nature Trails
    - Walking/Running
    - Bird watching
    - Photography
    - Astronomy / Stargazing
  - Hunting & Fishing

The HMGP is designed to reduce future damage claims and property losses – and potential loss of life. The Open Space Management Plan exists as a guide for the County to manage properties acquired through the HMGP in a manner consistent with the purpose of the HMGP – while at the same time providing important ecological benefits which will improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay and the quality of life for the citizens of Gloucester.

The plan may be amended to include additional properties that may be acquired either through the HMGP or other mechanisms that provide similar benefits to the community for hazard mitigation and ecological benefit.

**Key Recommendations**

**Recommendation 1: Leave acquired properties in their natural state.**

Gloucester County's Open Space Management Plan recommends that the best way to serve the goals of storm water mitigation is through the practice of allowing acquired properties to be returned to, or retained in, their natural state – whether as salt-water marsh, swamp, non-tidal wetlands, and/or grasslands – in perpetuity. This will mitigate the hazards associated with development in the floodplain, while helping to restore its natural functions – such as providing important habitat...
areas and improving the quality and quantity of groundwater. This recommendation will also best serve the preservation and restoration goals of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act by providing natural riparian buffer areas that reduce erosion and non-point source pollution as well as dissipate wave energy from storm events.

Recommendation 2: Utilize acquired properties for public water access or other appropriate recreational purposes.

Where the opportunity exists, the acquired properties could be used for recreational purposes. This includes uses such as water access, maintained park space, and trails. The County could also consider allowing some of these lands to be used for waterfowl hunting, birding, or other nature-based recreational opportunities by private groups or clubs.

Recommendation 3: Provide a minimum amount of maintenance on those properties which could be used for recreation or public access.

Where the opportunity for future recreation or access exists, it should not be lost to neglect – and some work should be performed to avoid that eventuality. This work would include the mowing of field-like properties, and removing dead wood and other potentially flammable debris from these sites to reduce the available fuel for fires.

Recommendation 4: Investigate the opportunities for using certain acquired properties for wetland mitigation.

The Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority (PAA) has suggested the possibility of leasing some of the acquired sites to serve as potential wetland mitigation banks. This use would provide for compensatory mitigation of unavoidable impacts to tidal wetlands as required by the Virginia Marine Resource Commission’s Tidal Wetlands Mitigation Compensation Policy. The County would have to evaluate the terms of any such proposed use for consistency with the purposes outlined in the Plan, as well as work with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) and FEMA to determine compatibility with HMGP guidelines.

Property Descriptions and Potential Uses

The following properties have been acquired, or are in the process of acquisition, by Gloucester County to be held as natural open space. The locations of the properties described below are shown on a map titled “Hazard Mitigation Open Space Plan Map” found at the end of this Plan.

9366 Guinea Road  
Tax Map #52-220  
5.9 Acres
This property is a narrow wedge shaped parcel adjacent to Achilles Elementary School. The School Board is maintaining the property in accordance with requirements of the property preserved as open space. Its proposed recreational use is to serve as a future fitness or nature trail for Achilles’ students and the general public; so far, no improvements – other than a “No Trespassing” sign – have been made to the property; it remains wooded. This property was acquired in November of 2005; the grant has been closed out.

9965 Line Fence Road  
Tax Map #52-379  
0.79 Acres
This parcel is mostly wooded and is located on a sharp curve in the road (Line Fence). It has no water access. This property was acquired in September of 2009; the grant has been closed out. It is recommended to leave this site natural.
9997 Line Fence Road  
Tax Map #52-377A  
0.64 Acres

This parcel fronts on Line Fence Road and is cleared and level; it has no water access. This property was acquired in July of 2013; the grant has been closed out. It is recommended to leave this site natural.

9997 Line Fence Road  
Tax Map #52-376  
0.76 Acres

This parcel was acquired with, and is adjacent to, the above property. It is also mostly cleared and level, with the rear (east end) of the lot being partially wooded and containing some wetlands. It has no apparent water access. This property was acquired in July of 2013; the grant has been closed out. It is recommended to leave this site natural.

10124 Maryus Road  
Tax Map #53-286  
1.0 Acres

This parcel is an open field located on the south side of Maryus Road. The site is taking on a “natural” appearance — with salt bushes, wax myrtle, and grasses becoming established. This site is recommended to be left open and natural, per the 2009 plan. This property was acquired in February of 2006; the grant has been closed out.

10265 Maryus Road  
Tax Map #53-103  
.28 Acres

This small parcel is cleared and level, and fronts on Maryus Road. It has no water access, but it is adjacent to a large area of salt-water wetlands. This property was acquired in February of 2014, under the Winter Storms grant (DR-1864) that closes on January 31, 2015. It is recommended to leave this site natural.

10346 Maryus Road  
Tax Map #53-325  
0.51 Acres

This parcel fronts on Maryus Road, is partially wooded, and no wetland vegetation is evident. It has no water access. This property was acquired in September of 2013 under the Winter Storms grant (DR-1864) and has a close-out date of August 30, 2015. There is a small, family cemetery on the west side of the property, and a member of the family has expressed interest in maintaining the site. It is recommended that the County enter into a maintenance agreement with the interested party, if requested – but otherwise, leave the site natural. The culvert that provided access from Maryus Road has been removed to deter vandalism; if the site is to be maintained, access will need to be provided.

10412 Maryus Road  
Tax Map #53-333  
35.97 Acres

This large tract of land is located behind the trailer park at the end of Beths Lane (private). It is primarily phragmites swamp, and therefore the 2009 Plan recommended the culvert access be removed and the site kept natural. It has water access, but it is extremely difficult to get to. This property was acquired in January of 2006; the grant has been closed out.

10473 Maryus Road  
Tax Map #53-73  
1.51 Acres

This parcel is a small lot at the entrance to Haywood Seafood. It is partially wooded, with phragmites taking over the northern portion, and has no water access. This property was acquired in February of 2013 under the Winter Storms grant (DR-1864) and has a close-out date of August 30, 2015. It is recommended to leave this site natural.
10483 Maryus Road  Tax Map #53-71  0.31 Acres
This small parcel fronts on Maryus Road, is mostly salt bushes, and is adjacent to the parcel above. The site is taking on a “natural” appearance now that TM#53-73 is not being maintained as a residence and “let go natural” as recommended in the 2009 plan. This property was acquired in January of 2006; the grant has been closed out.

Maryus Road  Tax Map #53-66  4.38 Acres
This parcel is also adjacent to Haywood Seafood Lane and the properties above. It is predominantly marsh (phragmites on the west end, spartina and needle rush to the east), and has access to navigable water. It has potential for recreational use, but a significant capital investment would be needed to provide the improvements necessary for access. This property was acquired in February of 2013; the grant has been closed out. It is recommended to leave this site natural; the marsh is healthy and providing water access would be cost-prohibitive.

2151 Jenkins Neck Road  Tax Map #53-158  0.5 Acres
This parcel, located on the east side of Jenkins Neck Road, has tall pines, salt bushes, and vines. Pine trees that are dead or dying should be removed from the site. It is recommended the site be left natural, per the 2009 plan, although it may (potentially) serve as a trail extension for the (potential) park located across the street. It has no water access. This property was acquired in January of 2006; the grant has been closed out.

2164 Jenkins Neck Road  Tax Map #53-131  4.02 Acres
This site, located on the west side of, and served by, Jenkins Neck Road was open land with a driveway and waterfront access. It is recommended for consideration for recreation opportunities and recreational water access, per the 2009 plan, but there are no plans in place for recreational use of the site and it has not been actively maintained. This property was acquired in July of 2007; the grant has been closed out. Some ongoing maintenance is recommended if the potential for future recreational use is to be preserved.

2060 Adlea Lane  Tax Map #53-225  1.5 Acres
This parcel is located off of Jenkins Neck Road. The property is partially wooded and in the process of reverting back to a natural state; part of the property is being maintained as part of the former owner’s yard, who also keeps insurance on the property – but there is no lease in effect. The property has no water access. This property was acquired in December of 2008, and the grant has been closed out. It is recommended that the site be left natural (by the County) and a maintenance agreement be established with the adjoining property owner.
2132 Big Island Road  Tax Map #53-254A  1.50 Acres
This is a long, thin, wedge-shaped property at the end of Big Island Road that is accessed by private lane – Big Island View. It is mostly cleared and level; phragmites are beginning to become established at the Southern end, and the remnants of the residence remain which will need to be removed prior to grant close-out. This property was acquired in March of 2013 as part of the Winter Storms grant (DR-1874) which closes August 30, 2015. It has excellent water access on two (2) sides, and has potential for future recreational uses - especially for boating and fishing. Some ongoing maintenance is recommended to preserve the site in useful condition.

10623 Heron Point Road  Tax Map # 53-254F  0.698 Acres
This is a small parcel located on the corner of Big Island View and Heron Point Road – both private roads. It is made up of phragmites swamp and marsh land. It is recommended to leave this site natural, per the 2009 plan. This property was acquired in September of 2006; the grant has been closed out.

10370 Tony Lane  Tax Map #53-314A  0.23 Acres
This is a very small lot off of Maundy’s Creek Lane on a private lane. The lot is partially wooded, in an area dominated by phragmites marsh. It has no water access. This property was acquired in 2013 as part of the Winter Storms grant (DR-1874) which closes August 30, 2015. It is recommended to leave this site natural.

10384 Tony Lane  Tax Map # 53-314  (0.77) Acres
This parcel is adjacent to the parcel above on Tony Lane (private); it has not yet been acquired. It contains multiple structures that will be either removed and/or demolished. It has no water access, and shares similar topography with TM#53-314A. Acquisition of this property is nearly complete as of October 1, 2014: It is part of the Winter Storms grant (DR-1874) which closes August 30, 2015. Once acquired, it would be recommended to leave this site natural.

2433 Maundys Creek Road  Tax Map #53-310  7.17 Acres
This parcel is located on the east side of Maundys Creek Road, and abuts the two Tony Lane parcels above (they are located to the east of this parcel). A maintenance agreement for the easement, the front of the site, and access to the cemetery was negotiated with a neighboring property owner, and is in the deed of acquisition. The majority of the property has returned to its “natural” state per the 2009 plan recommendations; Phragmites appear to have become well established, however. This property was acquired in July of 2006; the grant has been closed out.

2415 Maundys Creek Road  Tax Map # 53-309  1.00 Acres
This property fronts on Maundy’s Creek Road and lies in the middle of TM# 53-310. This property will be acquired through the Winter Storms grant (DR-1874) which closes August 30, 2015. It has no water access, and is overgrown with phragmites. Once acquired, it would be recommended to leave this site natural.
Maundys Creek Road          Tax Map # 53-297          (1.50) Acres
This parcel is completely wooded; it is located one lot back from Maundy's Creek Road and is accessed by private driveway. It has no water access. This property will be acquired under the Winter Storms grant (DR-1874) which has a close-out date of March 30, 2015. Once acquired, it would be recommended to leave this site natural.

Maundys Creek Road          Tax Map # 53-278          (2.00) Acres
This parcel is also located one lot back from Maundy's Creek Road; it abuts TM# 53-297 on its north side and is accessed by the same private driveway as TM# 53-297. It is mostly wooded. This property will be acquired under the Winter Storms grant (DR-1874) with a close-out date of March 30, 2015. Once acquired, it would be recommended to leave this site natural.

Maundys Creek Road          Tax Map # 53-275          (1.25) Acres
This parcel fronts on Maundy's Creek Road and abuts TM# 53-278 on its west side. It is extremely low-lying and is frequently flooded. This property will be acquired under the Winter Storms grant (DR-1874) with a close-out date of March 30, 2015. Once acquired, it would be recommended to leave this site natural.

Maundys Creek Road          Tax Map # 53-274          (0.98) Acres
This parcel fronts on Maundy's Creek Road and abuts TM# 53-275 on its north side. It has no water access, but is mostly vegetated with marsh grasses and salt bushes. This property was approved for acquisition by the Board of Supervisors on 7/1/14, but has not yet been acquired; it is under the grant for the Winter Storms (DR-1874) with a close-out date of March 30, 2015. Once acquired, it would be recommended to leave this site natural.

2370 Maundys Creek Road      Tax Map # 53-274A         (0.52) Acres
This parcel is set in the middle of TM#53-274 and also fronts on Maundy's Creek Road. The property contains a dwelling that must be demolished per the terms of the HMGP, but is otherwise vegetated with marsh grasses and salt bushes. It has no water access. This property was also approved for acquisition by the Board of Supervisors on 7/1/14, but has not yet been acquired; it is under the grant for the Winter Storms (DR-1874) with a close-out date of March 30, 2015. Once acquired, it would be recommended to leave this site natural.

2280 Maundys Creek Road      Tax Map # 53-264          3.34 Acres
This parcel is located on the west side of Maundys Creek Road. It was recommended in the 2009 plan to leave this site natural; the site does have potential for water access, with frontage directly on Monday Creek - although dumping on the site has been an ongoing problem. This property was acquired in August of 2009; the grant has been closed out. Vandals have removed the chain that once guarded the entrance, and continue to place trash on the site. It is recommended that, after debris is removed, either a stronger barrier be placed at the entrance to the property or the culvert be removed.
Andrews Road  
**Tax Map # 53-267B**  
1.27 Acres

This parcel is past the end of Andrews Road, which is private, and very narrow. It has water
frontage, but no apparent road frontage; it is densely wooded with a marsh fringe. It abuts TM# 53-
267E - which does have frontage on Andrews Road. This property was acquired in June of 2013;
the grant has been closed out. With access to the site being so difficult, it presents no recreational
opportunity; therefore, it is recommended to leave this site natural.

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10259 Andrews Road  
**Tax Map # 53-267E**  
0.26 Acres

This small parcel is at the end of Andrews Road (private, and very narrow) and abuts TM# 53-267B
on its west side. It has been cleared, but is reverting back to woods. It has no water access. This
property was acquired in June of 2013 under the “Nor’I da” grant (DR-1862), which closes on
January 31, 2015. It is recommended to leave this site natural.

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2773 Horse Point Road  
**Tax Map # 53-60**  
3.23 Acres

This parcel is located on the east side of Horse Point Road. The property contains a small area of
trees near the road, but the vast majority is marsh. There is water access on the far-east side of the
property, but it would be difficult and very costly to provide a means to reach it. This property was
acquired in November of 2013 under the Winter Storms grant (DR-1864), which closes March 30,
2015. It is recommended to leave this site natural.

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10485 Johns Lane  
**Tax Map # 53-45**  
(11.00) Acres

This large parcel is at the end of John’s Lane (private), and is in two parts. Access to the
property is difficult, especially at extreme high tides. It mostly spartina marsh, with sparse
pines and some phragmites. It has a long length of water access meandering along its southern
and eastern boundaries. This property has been approved for acquisition under the Winter
Storms grant (DR-1864), which closes August 30, 2015. This site presents some opportunity
for recreation in the form of a nature trail or possibly waterfowl hunting. It is recommended
that some maintenance be performed to keep the access road passable, if future recreational uses are desired.

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2858 Horse Point Road  
**Tax Map # 53-40A**  
1.55 Acres

This parcel is also on John’s Lane (private) and access is limited; this parcel is adjacent to the lower
and upper portions of TM# 53-45, and it also has limited water access. The site is now dominated
by phragmites. It was acquired in November of 2013, under the Winter Storms grant (DR-1864);
the close-out date is March 30, 2015. It is recommended to leave this site natural, except for access
to Tax Map #53-45.

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2922 Horse Point Road  
**Tax Map # 53-50**  
2.0 Acres

This parcel is on the west/north side of Horse Point Road, near the end. It does not have direct
water access – but water access appears to be available right across the street. It is recommended in
the 2009 plan to leave this site in its natural state. This parcel was acquired in May of 2007; the
grant has been closed out.
3173 Kings Creek Road  Tax Map #47-199A  0.87 Acres
This is a small parcel located on the east side of Kings Creek Road. This site is mostly forested, with some wetland features visible from the road. The parcel was purchased in November of 2005, and the grant has been closed out. It is recommended to leave this site natural, per the 2009 plan.

9601 Rowes Point Road  Tax Map # 47-153A  0.29 Acres
This parcel fronts on Rowes Point, is cleared and level, and has just a few trees and some wetlands near the rear of the lot; it has no water access. The parcel was acquired in February of 2013 under the Winter Storms grant (DR-1864), which has a close-out date of August 30, 2015. It is recommended to leave this site natural, although the County should consider any requests from adjoining property owners who might want to maintain the property in its current state.

Maintenance

General maintenance (including debris removal, ditch cleanings, mowing, etc.) that is required to keep the properties compliant with the terms of the grant will be needed. It is recommended that the County designate a specific department or entity to be responsible for monitoring properties acquired through the HMGP. The County Administrator should also designate staff to be responsive to any citizen calls/complaints regarding these properties. The land located next to Achilles Elementary School (9366 Guinea Road) is being maintained by the Gloucester County School Board.

Funding

The County needs to provide maintenance funds or determine a mechanism to maintain these properties. As noted, general maintenance is required for compliance with the terms of the HMGP.

Should the County wish to develop or maintain any of these sites for water access, as public parks or for other recreational purposes, the plans for such use(s) will be submitted to the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) for review and comment before being placed into the County’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Lease/Use of Properties

Any property acquired under the HMGP that is to be leased or used under contract for a term longer than one year will have such agreement reviewed by VDEM prior to execution of said agreement by Gloucester County. Any temporary agreements, or agreements lasting less than one year, will be subject to the County’s general procedures.