



Walton County Planning and Development Services

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Walton County Floodplain Management 2024 Annual Progress Report

The Walton County Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) serves as the county-wide Floodplain Management Plan under the Community Rating System (CRS). Under CRS Activity 510, the County is required to complete a Floodplain Management Annual Progress Report and provide it to the public. This document serves as that report.

Adoption of the LMS/ Updates

The County's Multi-Jurisdictional Local Mitigation Strategy or LMS, was adopted on June 11, 2020. The 2020 LMS complies with the federal hazard mitigation planning standards contained in 44 CFR 201/6(b)-(d). The plan has been approved for five (5) years and is set to expire on August 3, 2025.

September 2024, staff presented the County wide Watershed Master Plan (WMP), part of the FDEM Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) Watershed Planning Initiative to the BCC. The WMP will be used to support the 2025 LMS update and provides additional credit under Activity 450 and is the prerequisite for a Class 4 CRS Rating.

As part of the State-wide Vulnerability Assessment, the LMS Working Group met on November 13, 2024, to inventory critical stakeholder assets as part of the Resilient Florida Grant Program established under Florida Senate Bill 1954 (May 12, 2021) and House Bill 1557 (July 1, 2024).

The LMS Working Group met February 8, 2025, to finalize the Multi-Jurisdictional Local Mitigation Strategy DRAFT to be sent to FDEM for preliminary review.

Purpose and Objectives of LMS

The purpose of the LMS is to develop a unified approach for dealing with identified hazards and hazard management problems, including flooding. The LMS serves as a tool to direct the County in its on-going efforts to reduce vulnerability and increase resiliency when impacted by both natural and man-made hazards. The LMS also develops a priority project list (PPL) and establishes funding priorities for mitigation projects.

The primary objectives of the LMS are to:

- Improve the community's resistance to damage from known natural, technological, and societal hazards.

- Position Walton County to compete more effectively for pre- and post- disaster mitigation funding.
- Reduce the cost of disasters at all levels.
- Expedite community recovery when disasters occur.

Local Mitigation Strategy Working Group

Walton County coordinates the Local Mitigation Strategy Working Group (LMSWG) established to review and make recommendations concerning the LMS. The LMSWG consists of representatives from the county, county municipalities, and local organizations and is staffed by the County’s Emergency Management Department. The LMSWG last met on February 8, 2025, to finalize the Multi-Jurisdictional Local Mitigation Strategy DRAFT to be sent to FDEM for preliminary review and discussed updates to the PPL and eligible Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding.

Project Prioritization

The LMS Working Group has established a Project Prioritization List (PPL) eligible for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Building Resilient Infrastructure & Communities (BRIC), and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) grants and/or other potential funding sources. The PPL is set to be updated as part of the 2025 LMS update.

Walton County adopted a 5-year work plan on February 27, 2024. Identified projects will be prioritized to determine eligibility for HMGP, FMA, and BRIC (see linked attachments).

CRS Program Participation

The LMS references the importance and benefits of participation in the Community Rating System. As part, the County has established flood protection measures and educational opportunities beyond the minimum requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). These efforts have allowed Walton County Unincorporated Area to achieve a “Class 6” certification, resulting in a 20% discount on flood insurance premiums for properties located in the Special Flood Hazard Area.

The Florida Division of Emergency Management completed a Community Assistance Visit (CAV) in 2021 as part of the County’s participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and CRS program.

The County receives CRS credit points from a variety of activities that promote flood protection and education. These activities are conducted by various County Departments. The following table summarizes the on-going activities; the departments or divisions that perform the activities, and the resulting in credit points to the CRS program:

CRS Activity	Department(s)/Division(s)	Activity #
Maintain elevation certificates, make copies of certificates available to the	Planning and Development Services Department	310
Provide Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) information, maintain updated FIRM	Planning and Development Services Department	320
Provide pamphlets to lenders, insurance agents and real estate offices regarding City services	Planning and Development Services / Public Works Department	320
Provide outreach to community/ Flood protection information	Planning and Development Services / Public Works Department	330
Provide credited hazard disclosure measures; information on recorded plats	Planning and Development Services Department	340
Preserve floodplain in open space through zoning / Comprehensive Plan Land Use / public acquisition	Planning and Development Services Department	420
Review new development for compliance with flood protection regulations	Planning and Development Services / Building Department	430
Track substantial improvements / permitting to meet current requirements	Planning and Development Services Department	430
Maintain and update flood data	Planning and Development Services Department	440
Enforcement of regulations for stormwater management	Planning and Development Services/ Public Works Department	450
Floodplain management planning	Planning and Development Services Department	510
Maintain drainage systems through a regular program and CIP plan	Public Works Department/ Planning and Development Services Department	540
Enforce stream dumping regulations	Public Works Department/ Code Compliance Department	540
Provides outreach material about flood warning and safety measures	Emergency Management Department/ Planning and Development Services Department	610

Community Outreach

Walton County routinely engages in public outreach as part of the on-going effort to educate and inform citizens about flooding and flood protection. Some of these efforts include:

- Participating in events that allow staff to personally disseminate important information that assist citizens in their preparation efforts for the upcoming hurricane season; flooding and flood related issues caused by natural and man-made sources - including storms, poor drainage, and illegal dumping in streams, ditches, and drainage structures.
- Providing educational materials for local organizations to discuss potential or current flooding concerns related to their industry.
- Attending County sponsored meetings where flooding is or may be a concern.
- Developing and maintaining Flood Prevention and Floodplain Management pages on the County website that provides information and resources intended to help citizens make educated flood-related decisions.
- Staff two (2) Certified Floodplain Managers who are available to answer permitting questions and concerns, as they pertain to development in the floodplain, and to provide flood protection assistance.
- Display informative flood-related brochures available at various County Departments.
- Maintain a series of [FEMA publications](#) regarding flood protection and mitigation online and at each County Library location.

Certified Floodplain Manager Program

The Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) has established a national program for professional certification of floodplain managers. The program recognizes continuing education and professional development that enhances the knowledge and performance of local, state, federal, and private-sector floodplain managers. Two (2) County staff members have achieved the Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM) designation. This reflects Walton County's continued commitment to professional service in administering the floodplain management program.

County Website Access to FEMA Digitized Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs)

Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) identify the location of Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs) which are based on 100-year flood plains. These flood maps are used regularly by the public for flood insurance reasons and by county staff in regulating development in SFHAs.

In 2016, FEMA completed a FIRM modernization project in Walton County, resulting in the County formally adopting revised digital FIRMs effective December 30, 2020. Those revised, current FIRMS are now available for [public access](#).

In October 2024, Walton County partnered with [Forerunner](#) to provide the public with access to important flood risk information, such as base flood elevations (BFE), evacuation zones, location is a Repetitive Loss Area (RLA), and finished construction documents.

Summary

To date, Walton County has achieved and maintains a Class 6 certification. Activities are undertaken by various county departments on an ongoing basis to maintain the CRS certification, which results in discounts to flood insurance premiums in the unincorporated county. Under CRS Activity 510, the County is required to complete a Floodplain Management Annual Progress Report and provide it to the public. This report serves to meet that requirement and can be found published on the [County Floodplain Management Webpage](#).

The LMS serves as the County's Floodplain Management Plan under the CRS of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The current LMS was approved June 11, 2020, and is set to expire August 2025. The DRAFT update is set to be submitted for preliminary review and comment February 2025. The LMSWG met February 8, 2025, to finalize DRAFT 2025 LMS and discuss revisions to the Priority Project List (PPL).

Walton County adopted a 5-year work plan on February 27, 2024. Identified projects will be prioritized and included in the PPL to determine HMGP eligibility (see linked attachments).

Attachment(s):

[Walton County Capital Improvement Project List](#)

[Walton County 5-year Work Plan \(Adopted, February 27, 2024\)](#)