



LMS TIMES



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Director's Corner

**By Mary Blakeney,
FPDEM, Director,
PBCDEM**



2023 has been an exciting year for Emergency Management. We have made significant progress in the revision of our Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) which we anticipate a final draft by March 2024. I want to express our sincere gratitude to the members of our LMS Revisions Sub-Committee, led by Ralph Wall from the City of West Palm Beach, who have worked tirelessly on making enhancements to our plan.

As we continue to emphasize the im-

portance of partnerships, Palm Beach County added 12 new projects totaling almost \$22 million to the Prioritized Project List (PPL). We will continue to encourage participation from each municipality in our county. Our team is planning on conducting roadshows on the PPL application process so that every city can have projects on record, including unincorporated Palm Beach County.

We will continue to strive to achieve maximum participation in the LMS Working Group and Community Rating System (CRS) User Group meetings.

We need to continue to build on our partnerships and have a mitigation mindset for success in 2024. Remember every dollar spent for mitigation saves six times that in recovery.

Palm Beach County Earns Impressive Score on CRS Annual Recertification Element

by Jacquelyn Anderson of the PZB—Building Division

The Community Rating System (CRS) is a voluntary incentive program administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that rewards communities for their efforts to reduce flood risks. Communities that participate in the CRS must go through rigorous verification and recertification processes that assess a community's floodplain management practices. Communities are scored and ranked according to their consistent participation in various activities. Ratings are designated as Class 1 (highest) through 10 (non-participating). For each class 9 or higher, communities are eligible for flood insurance premium discounts in 5 percent increments that range from 5% to as much as 45%, depending upon the community's rating.

As a Class 5 CRS community, Palm Beach County (PBC) goes through an annual recertification, which includes a component that reviews the accuracy of various construction certificates, such as elevation certificates. Accurate elevation certificates are essential for effective floodplain management and insurance rate determinations because they provide information about a building's elevation in relation to the Base Flood Elevation (BFE). Communities must achieve a minimum 90% accuracy on construction certificates to remain in the CRS program.

During the 2023 annual CRS recertification, PBC received an accuracy score of 98 percent. Achieving 98% accuracy on elevation certificates during CRS annual recertification is a commendable achievement.

PBC's Building Division is responsible for collecting, reviewing, and maintaining elevation certificates and other construction certificates. To attain high accuracy rates, PBC Building Division staff recommends communities implement key strategies that begin with training and certification of staff involved in the review process. Well-trained personnel are less likely to make errors in data collection and documentation. Additionally, implementing rigorous quality control measures, such as peer reviews and audits, can help identify and rectify any discrepancies.

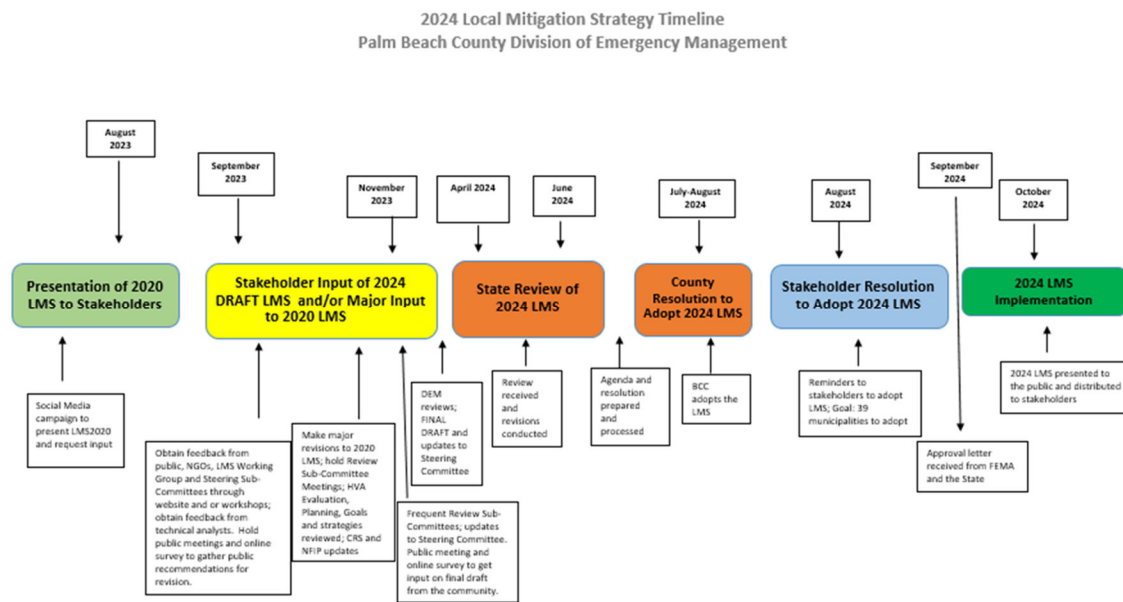
Fostering collaboration between community officials, surveyors, and property owners can lead to better data collection and further improve accuracy rates. Continual monitoring and improvement of the elevation certificate process are essential to maintaining high standards.

Achieving 98% accuracy on elevation certificates during CRS annual recertification is a testament to PBC's commitment to flood risk reduction. Through comprehensive training, quality control and collaborative efforts, communities can attain this level of precision, enhancing their resilience to flooding and reaping the benefits of reduced flood insurance premiums for their residents.

2024 Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) Revision Process

The Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) is a plan to develop and execute an on-going strategy for identifying and reducing the community’s vulnerability to identify natural, technological, and human-caused hazards. Palm Beach County’s Board of County Commissioners, followed by the municipalities, adopted the inaugural LMS in 1999. For almost 25 years, the LMS has been developing and executing ongoing strategies while considering and prioritizing cost-effective hazard-specific mitigation initiatives.

Every five (5) years, the LMS must undergo revisions. At present, revisions are underway to craft the LMS 2024. On August 23, 2023, the LMS Steering Committee approved and adopted the below revision timeline.



Public input is of paramount importance to the revisions process. To date, the LMS Revisions Sub-Committee has offered the following public input opportunities:

- Review request of the current LMS 2020—August 2, 2023
- Public Input Survey published—August 21, 2023
- First Draft of LMS 2024 posted for public review—September 6, 2023
- First Public Input Forum held—September 13, 2023

As revisions progress, the public will be offered an opportunity to view the final draft and participate in an additional public forum. Publishing of the final draft will be announced via press release and social media. Once all applicable comments have been included in the final draft, it will be sent to the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) for approval no later than April 1, 2024.

To review the first draft, please navigate to the following web address:

PBC LMS Website link: <https://discover.pbcgov.org/publicsafety/dem/Sections/Planning-Local-Mitigation-Strategy.aspx>

You may submit comments to: PBC-LMS@pbcgov.org

Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) Prioritized Project List (PPL)

The Prioritized Project List (PPL) is a consolidated list of mitigation projects within the county that are reviewed, scored, and ranked twice per year.

In August 2023, Letters of Support were produced for 11 hazard mitigation projects, on the current Spring 2023 PPL, seeking funding from HMGP DR 4673—Hurricane Ian. The 11 projects were from five (5) municipalities and one (1) special district totaling \$40,361,741!

Fall 2023 project submissions were evaluated and will be submitted to the LMS Steering Committee for approval and adoption on October 25, 2023. To view the current PPL, log onto:

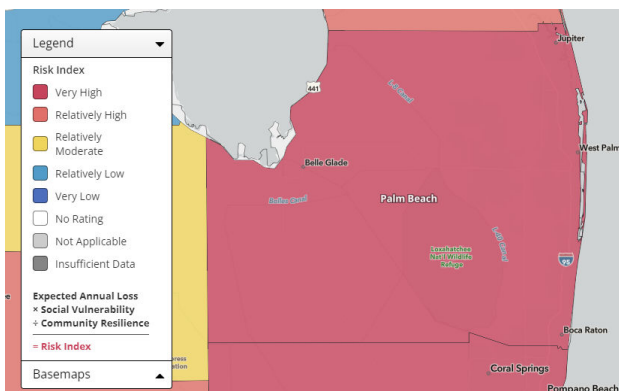
<https://discover.pbcgov.org/publicsafety/dem/Sections/Planning-Local-Mitigation-Strategy.aspx>

FEMA’s National Risk Index

The National Risk Index is a dataset and online tool that helps illustrate the US communities at most risk for 18 natural hazards. It was designed and built by FEMA in close collaboration with various stakeholders and partners in academia; local, state, and federal government; and private industry.

The National Risk Index is intended to help users better understand the natural hazard risk of their communities. Intended users include planners and emergency managers at the local, regional, state, and federal levels, as well as other decision makers and interest members of the general public. For example, it can assist with decision making to:

- Enhance hazard mitigation plans
- Update emergency operations plans
- Prioritize and allocate resources
- Identify the need for more refined risk assessments
- Encourage community-level risk communication and engagement.



The adjacent map of Palm Beach County indicates very high to relatively moderate risk in :

Risk	Very High	Relative-ly High	Moderate-ly High
Hurricane	✓		
Lightening	✓		
Cold Wave		✓	
Drought		✓	
Riverine Flooding		✓	
Tornado		✓	
Wildfire			✓
Landslide			✓
Strong Wind			✓

The above table does not list all of the risks scored for Palm Beach County. To access the data in its entirety, please log onto:

<https://hazards.fema.gov/nri/>



FEMA

King Tides 2023

King Tides are a natural part of the tide cycle, which means they can be predicted far in advance. However, on the day of the predicted King Tides, natural variations in weather may cause more or less flooding than expected.

Based on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) predictions for their Lake Worth tide gauge, the highest tides of 2023 in Palm Beach will occur on:

- October 27–31, 2023
- November 26, 2023

King Tide flooding is not guaranteed during these dates, and sunny-day and other types of flooding, such as rainfall-induced flooding or storm surge, may occur outside these dates!

KNOW YOUR ZONE!!

Access Palm Beach County’s *Flood Zone Look-up Tool* to determine if your address could be adversely affected by flooding.

<https://discover.pbcgov.org/publicsafety/dem/pages/know-your-zone.aspx>

CONGRATULATIONS

to the Florida Division of Emergency Management’s Mitigation Bureau and Planning Unit

for the approval of their 2023 Florida State Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP) by FEMA!!

The FL SHMP provides detailed profiles of Florida’s risk to natural, human-caused, and technological hazards. The hazard profiles are instrumental in developing the State’s mitigation strategy—the goals and objectives for how the state will reduce that risk.

The 2023 FL SHMP is the first in the nation to utilize the Esri ArcGIS Hub platform to move the 500-page PDF document to a new web-based, interactive site.

WELL DONE!

<https://flshmp-floridadisaster.hub.arcgis.com>

Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB)

Phosphorus and nitrogen present in excess amounts in water sources, can encourage the growth of algal blooms. These algal blooms can turn into harmful algal blooms (HAB) when their growth becomes uncontrollable resulting in the production of toxic chemical byproducts that can have harmful effects on people and animals.

Blue-Green Algae Task Force

Governor DeSantis took a major step forward in combating Blue-Green Algae within Florida through the creation of the Blue-Green Algae Task Force along with the appointment of its five members.

The Blue-Green Algae Task Force plays an important role in protecting Florida’s water and water-related resources. Task Force members’ scientific expertise and input figures prominently in the department’s efforts to improve water quality throughout the state.

The Blue-Green Algae Task Force will ensure that objective and sound science informs Florida’s environmental decision-making process. Input from the task force will be used to support key funding and restoration initiatives and guide regulatory changes that are needed to improve water quality for the benefit of all Floridians.

For more information, please log onto:

<http://protectingfloridatogether.gov/state-action/blue-green-algae-task-force>

Request for LMS Times Articles

We are requesting community input for publication in the LMS Times quarterly newsletter. Has your community implemented or completed a mitigation project? If so, please submit a narrative of approximately 500 words along with high resolution photos to:

Jerri L. Clairday, LMS/CRS Coordinator

Electronic submission:
JClairday@pbcgov.org

Hardcopy submissions:
20 Military Trail
West Palm Beach, FL 33415