

IV. LEVY COUNTY PROFILE

Located in North Central Florida, Levy County is bordered on the northwest by Dixie County and the Suwannee River; on the north by Gilchrist County; on the east by Alachua County and on the east and southeast by Marion County; on the south by Citrus County and the Withlacoochee River and on the west by the Gulf of Mexico. This general area has several regional labels such as the “Big Bend Area” or the “Nature Coast.” Levy County is also a part of the Withlacoochee Region.

From west to east Levy County begins as a marshy coastal wetlands area with swampy hammocks drained by the Suwannee, Waccasassa and Withlacoochee Rivers. Central forested flatlands rise to rolling hills and pasture. An inland ridge known as the Brooksville Ridge runs in a generally north and south direction through the eastern part of the County.

The elevation of the County’s topography generally increases from west to east. The area from the Gulf of Mexico to U.S. 19 is typically less than 50 feet above sea level. The majority of the remaining land mass is 50 to 70 feet above sea level. The highest elevations exist around the community of Morriston, approximately 100 feet.

Land use in Levy County is largely agricultural with mixed land uses that include residential, commercial and light industrial areas. Coastal areas also include increased recreational and tourism uses.

The total land area of Levy county is 704,000 acres. As much as 684,000 acres (97.2%) are considered to be “farm” acres. Many farm acres include mixed uses. The breakdown of agricultural land usage is:

Crops	20%
Forestry	67%
Other Agriculture	13%

A more specific breakdown of land use in addition to agriculture include:

Active Agriculture	434,207 acres	(61%)
Residential	147,176	(21%)
Conservation	106,000	(15%)
Vacant	18,389	(3%)
Public Facilities	5,394	(0.8%)
Industrial	1,516	(0.2%)
Recreation	720	(0.1%)
Commercial	450	(0.06%)
Historical Resources	200	(0.02%)

From these figures we can conclude that Levy County is a rural, agricultural County. Forestry takes up many acres and wood products are considered a major economic export. Fishing, aquiculture and tourism are also economic interests that are significant. Most of the urban type land uses are divided between the County's eight municipalities. Based on the 2008 BEBR population estimates, the cities and towns of Levy County can all be considered "small towns" as shown in the following population breakdown:

Levy County Total	40,817
Unincorporated Areas	30,650
Bronson	1,159
Cedar Key	928
Chiefland	2,265
Fanning Springs (part)	607
Inglis	1,724
Otter Creek	147
Williston	2,577
Yankeetown	760

Source: April 1, 2008 Population Estimates, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Florida

There are approximately 28 persons per square mile making this one of the least densely populated counties in the state. The Williston to Chiefland corridor along U.S. 27 Alt. is one of the more densely populated areas, along with the U.S. 19 corridor from the Dixie County line to the Citrus County line. Additional population and housing analysis is included in the Vulnerability Assessment portion of this document.

This profile illustrates some of the geographic vulnerabilities of Levy County and infers some of the limited ability to respond to and mitigate emergency situations. Basically Levy County is a large, rural, coastal County with a population that is widely distributed throughout. In addressing the characteristics of the County this Strategy lists the following projects and initiatives:

Levy County NFIP Flood Zone Study and Redesignation

Levy County participates in the National Flood Insurance Program. The county shall continue to adopt and enforce floodplain management regulations. This task is handled by the Levy County Planning Department. Annual updates and county efforts continue to be pursued through various mitigation efforts. Due to many low lying areas of the county, the planning department continues to make elevation determinations and make recommendations of zoning based upon vulnerability.

Since the 1999 and 2004 LMS plans, Levy County has encouraged all its cities to participate in the National Floodplain Insurance program. In the previous planning cycle, Otter Creek has entered into the NFIP based on the recommendations of the 2004 LMS update. With the addition of Otter Creek, the all of the county and most municipalities now participates in the NFIP program. Based on the 1984 Flood Insurance Rate Maps series, The Cities of Chiefland and Williston do not contain flood plain in their city boundaries. This can be verified by FIRM community-panels 120145 0050 D and 120145 0175 D for the City of Chiefland and community panel 120145 0250 D for the City of Williston. Since these panels were

created, there are annexations affecting both cities boundaries which do include floodplain areas. For these reasons, each city has policy in place to protect and control development in the floodplain.

The Levy County planning department maintains and works with the floodplain management mapping and monitoring process. Each Municipality maintains their own compliance with NFIP standards. The actions needed at the municipality level for continued compliance with the NFIP is at the will of the community. With the majority county participating in NFIP, the following tasks will ensure continued compliance. The county and each participating municipality will ensure these tasks are completed in compliance with FEMA regulations.

- Continue to enforce their adopted Floodplain Management Ordinance requirements, which include regulation all new development and substantial improvements in Special Flood hazard Areas (SFHA).
- Continue to maintain all records pertaining to floodplain development, which shall be available for public inspection.
- Continue to notify the public when there are proposed changes to the floodplain ordinance of Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM).
- Maintain the map and Letter of Map Change repositories.
- Continue to promote and encourage all property owners to seek and maintain flood insurance.
- Continue their Community Rating System outreach programs

Community Rating System Eligible Communities							
Community Number	Community Name	CRS Entry Date	Current Effective Date	Current Class	% Discount for SFHA	% Discount for Non-SFHA	Status
120145	Levy County	10/1/94	10/1/09	7	15	5	C
120146	Town of Fanning Springs	10/1/93	10/1/08	8	10	5	C
120147	Town of Yankeetown	10/1/94	10/1/08	6	20	10	C

Source: FEMA

NFIP Policy Statistics, Levy County			
Community Name	Policies In-Force	Insurance In-Force Whole \$	Written Premium In-Force
Town of Bronson	2	1,280,000	2,856
City of Cedar Key	555	73,220,700	791,533
Town of Fanning Springs	13	2,003,600	4,740
City of Otter Creek	2	40,000	554
Town of Yankeetown	213	38,708,700	209,335
Levy County	400	69,466,500	325,346

Source: FEMA

The county will maintain NFIP compliance as directed by FEMA. Since there is county wide participation in the program, several municipalities have used the LMS for the floodplain management plan as part of the requirements to enter into the Community Rating System (CRS). More information can be found at the following: www.Fema.gov/about/programs/nfip

Additional Mitigation Projects and Initiatives

Levy County 800MHZ Radio Tower- Cedar Key (Rank 4, Score 68.5)

Construction of tower and communications equipment upfit to serve the communications needs of western Levy County.

Problem Statement: Presently there is little to non-existent 800MHZ radio communication ability for the western portion of Levy County.

Mitigation: Protect the life health and safety of the all residents in the County who rely on emergency services in the case of a declared disaster or event.

Funding Source(s): Pre-Disaster Mitigation funds (PDM) or Emergency Management Preparedness Assistance (EMPA) would be the most appropriate source of funding . Community Development Building Grant (CDBG) could also serve as funding source.

Estimated Cost: \$100,000 to 500,000 or more (depending on the need for retrofit measures).

Comments: This opportunity provides the foundation to co-locate cellular telephone equipment to improve communications among both civilian and emergency personnel in the areas of Cedar Key and the surrounding parts of the County. This project can be implemented and administered by Emergency Management in 6 to 12 months as money becomes available.

Hazards Mitigated: All Hazards in all jurisdictions. This project will mitigate existing building and any new construction which would be serviced by this project.

Jurisdiction Mitigated: All

Levy County 800MHZ Radio Upgrade- Williston (Rank 12, Score 63.25)

Upgrade communication equipment to serve the communications needs of The City of Williston and surrounding areas.

Problem Statement: Presently there is a gap in the coverage of the existing 800MHZ radio communication system ability in and around The City of Williston.

Mitigation: Protects the life health and safety of the all residents in the County who rely on emergency services in the case of a declared disaster or event.

Funding Source(s): Pre-Disaster Mitigation funds (PDM) or Emergency Management Preparedness Assistance (EMPA) would be the most appropriate source of funding . Community Development Building Grant (CDBG) could also serve as funding source.

Estimated Cost: \$100,000 to 500,000 or more (depending on the need for retrofit measures).

Comments: The equipment needed could be located on one of the City water towers or be co-located with cellular telephone equipment to improve communications among both civilian and emergency personnel in and around the City of Williston and the surrounding parts of the County. This project can be implemented and administered by Emergency Management in 6 to 12 months as money becomes available.

Hazards Mitigated: All Hazards in all jurisdictions. This project will mitigate existing building and any new construction which would be serviced by this project.

Jurisdiction Mitigated: All

Levy County- County Road 335 Roadway Improvements (Rank 23, Score 54.87)

Reconstruction of Levy County Road CR 335 to elevate and install equalizing culverts to prevent flooding on a primary Levy County Hurricane Evacuation route. This work is needed at location 1,000 feet east of the intersection of SR 121 and CR 335. The section of reconstruction will be approximately 1,500 feet in length with shoulder work on both sides of CR 335.

Problem Statement: The above mentioned section of road is prone to flooding. Rebuilding the section of road to include equalizing culverts will regulate the flow of flood waters in this area and prevent future closing of CR 335. This work will allow a crucial section of evacuation route to be maintained during events where evacuations would be ordered.

Mitigation: Protects the life health and safety of the all residents in the County who rely on emergency services in the case of a declared disaster or event. Maintenance of evacuation routes are critical to those who would potentially use these routes to evacuate.

Funding Source(s): Pre-Disaster Mitigation funds (PDM) or Emergency Management Preparedness Assistance (EMPA) would be the most appropriate source of funding.

Estimated Cost: The projected costs of this project are approximately \$75,000 per estimates by the Levy County Superintendent of Roads.

Comments: The subject section of roadway serves as a crucial link of evacuation route. This road is also frequently obstructed during times of inclement weather conditions. The prescribed roadway improvements of this project will improve access to emergency response vehicles to affected local populations during both emergency and non emergency situations. This project can be implemented and administered by Emergency Management in 12 to 18 months as money becomes available.

Hazards Mitigated: All Hazards in all jurisdictions. This project will mitigate existing buildings and any new construction which would be serviced by this project. Depending on the construction design, mitigation actions possible on new drainage structures built in conjunction with project.

Jurisdiction Mitigated: All

Levy County- Public Outreach- (Rank 17, Score 61.5)

Distribute all hazards information to all communities and residents of Levy County.

Problem Statement: The residents of Levy County and communities do not have one all hazards information resource destination. Currently, obtaining information regarding specific hazards is difficult and not in any one place.

Mitigation: Create a database of online resources and contacts with in the communities and in Levy County for agencies and individuals to assist with each of the hazards specific to each jurisdiction. Once this information is gathered and published via the County Emergency Management website, inform citizens of its availability through advertisements, mailings and press releases on any means deemed appropriate by county staff.

Funding Source(s): Pre-Disaster Mitigation funds (PDM) or Emergency Management Preparedness Assistance (EMPA) would be the most appropriate source of funding .

Estimated Cost: \$5,000 plus publication costs (depending on the methods of distribution).

Comments: Every jurisdiction faces similar and sometimes unique hazards. Education through outreach is some of the most cost effective methods to prevent losses and is the most cost effective means of mitigation. Participation in programs such as Fire Wise and Nation Flood Insurance Program or information as simple as evacuation routes and zones can mitigate losses and save lives. Outreach tailored to each jurisdiction will assist the citizens of Levy County be informed.

Below is a table of jurisdiction and their relative vulnerability to hazards. Education will reach beyond the relative threat as outlined in chapter X. This project can be implemented and administered by Emergency Management staff in 6 to 12 months as money becomes available.

Hazards Mitigated: All Hazards in all jurisdictions. This project will also help to mitigate existing building and any new construction which would be serviced by this project.

Jurisdiction Mitigated: All