

FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT IN
WEST-CENTRAL ILLINOIS

An
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ABSTRACT

Apathy and lack of information concerning the possibility of natural disasters has made flooding in west-central Illinois a much ignored problem. Even after the advent of the National Flood Insurance Program in 1968 and sanctions imposed by the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973, the region remained removed from the flood insurance program.

By the early 1980s, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Illinois Division of Water Resources contracted local planning agencies throughout the state of Illinois to provide the technical assistance necessary to promote the goals and objectives of the National Flood Insurance Program, and encourage communities affected by flood hazards to adopt floodplain regulations. The Western Illinois Regional Council in Macomb provided that assistance in the west-central Illinois region. The Western Illinois Regional Council field advisor closely examined the physical factors that contributed to the development of flood hazard areas, the extent of the floodplain and, the history of flooding in the region. This information was provided to the local elected officials and citizens in order to demonstrate solid evidence of the seriousness of flooding in their community. The approach proved to be successful in west-central Illinois as 21 communities and counties joined the regular phase of the National Flood Insurance Program between 1982 and 1986 by adopting a floodplain ordinance.

Floodplain management is a continuous process because of the constant changing of the physical and cultural environment. The local units of government in west-central Illinois must share the common goal of adopting

floodplain regulations in protecting life, minimizing public expenditures and saving lives. There must also be cooperation between local government and the state and federal flood agencies to provide for comprehensive planning and coordination for sound development and use of the floodplains.