



UNC
INSTITUTE FOR
THE ENVIRONMENT



A Study of Floodplain Buyouts in Four States

David Salvesen, PhD - University of North Carolina

Rebecca Kihlsinger, PhD – Environmental Law Institute

Sabin Center

Columbia University

April 13, 2017

Project Overview

- Assess funding and use of buyout properties
- Identify obstacles to restoring wetlands and floodplains
- Visited 15 sites in 4 states
- Interviewed key informants
- Prepared maps of buyout sites



Case Study Sites

MN – East Grand Forks, Moorhead, Austin and

Montevideo

NJ – Pequannock, Manville, Wayne and Sayreville

NC – Clyde, Kinston, Rocky Mount & Charlotte

WI – Kenosha, Jefferson & Pierce Counties

Population: 1,223 to >1 million

Buyouts: 45 – over 500

Advantages of Buyouts

- Permanently reduces flood risks
 - Removes properties from harm's way
 - Avoided costs of future flooding
- Returns land to floodplains
- Provides opportunity for creating public amenities



Disadvantages of Buyouts

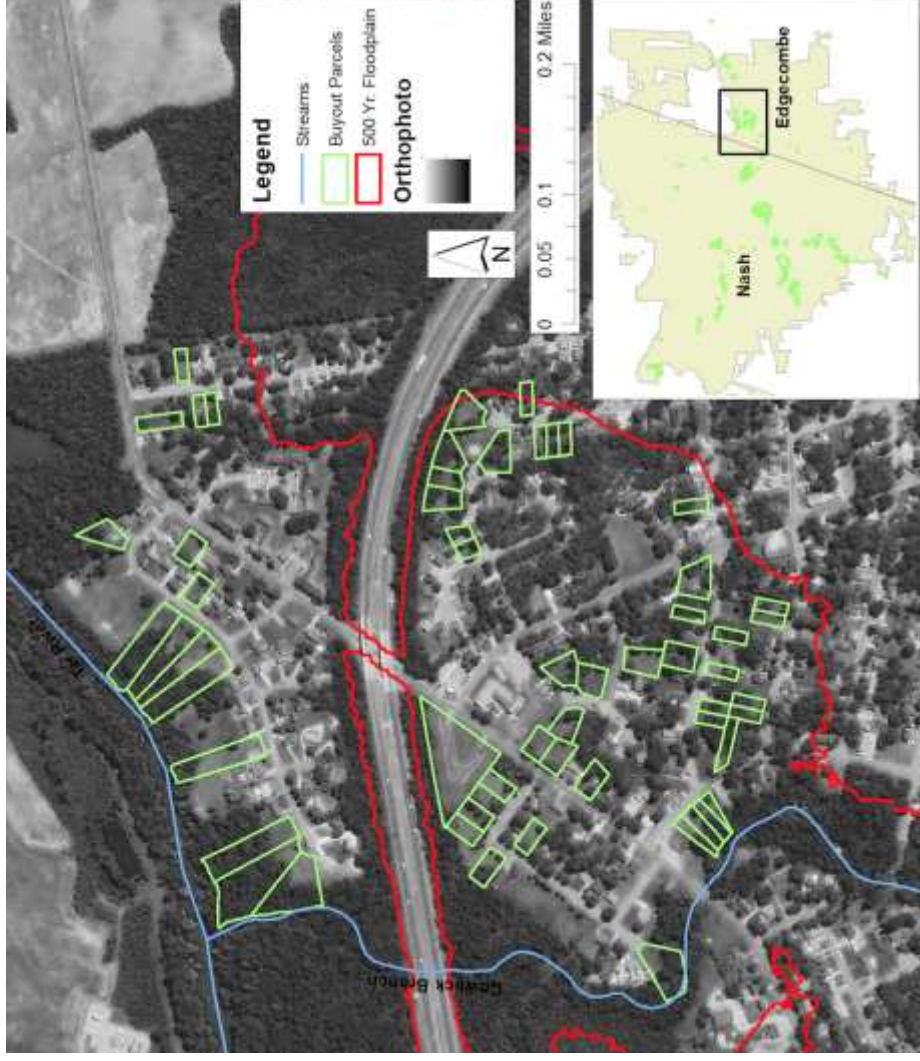
- Patchwork pattern of buyout limits use
- Finding replacement housing
- Loss of tax base
- Cost to maintain properties
- Breakup of community



Patchwork Pattern of Acquisitions



Patchwork Pattern of Acquisitions



Uses of Acquired Lands



Uses of Acquired Lands



Uses of Acquired Lands



Uses of Acquired Lands



Funding

- Federal - HMGP, CDBG
- Local option sales tax (Austin, MN)
- Open space funds (NJ)
- Stormwater management fee (Charlotte)
- Proceeds from sale of buyout homes (Austin)



Issues

- Holdouts – not everyone wants to sell
- Funding – federal funds triggered by disaster
- Time – it takes >1 year to implement a buyout
- Housing – flooding can create a shortage



Conclusions and Recommendations

- Prioritize properties in advance
- Partner with other agencies or departments
- Provide incentives for holdouts, e.g., relocation assistance
- Seize the opportunity
- Understand the long-term costs of a buyout
- Engage the community

Contact Information

David Salvesen, PhD

salvesen@unc.edu

Link to case studies:

<https://www.eli.org/sustainable-use-land/floodplain-buyout-case-studies>



UNC
INSTITUTE FOR
THE ENVIRONMENT



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL