

NRCS, Blue Acres & Cranford Buyout and Restoration Project

January 27, 2025





DEP Blue Acres helps New Jersey residents and communities identify and avoid risks of flooding through strategic climate resilience planning and the state-led acquisition of flood-prone property.

Core missions:

Disaster recovery: Blue Acres helps New Jersey residents whose homes have been damaged in flooding events.

Disaster Preparedness: Blue Acres implements buyouts that increase community resilience by acquiring lands that are flood-prone or may buffer other lands at risk due to sea-level rise, storms, or storm-related flooding.





THE BLUE ACRES BUYOUT PROCESS

blueacres@dep.nj.gov



BLUE ACRES

1

RESILIENCE PLANNING

The DEP meets with local government officials and homeowners to develop and advance resilience planning, which may include exploring the potential of voluntary residential buyouts.

2

GRANT APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT

Priority ranking criteria, federal funding requirements, funding allocations, and restoration potential cumulatively drive grant application and buyout funding decision making.

3

FUNDING AWARDS ANNOUNCED

Upon notification of a federal grant award, local government partners will be updated, and homeowners will be notified in writing by Blue Acres.

4

BUYOUT IMPLEMENTATION

Each property owner is assigned to work with a dedicated Blue Acres case manager. The State handles real estate and grant coordination with funding sources and agency partners.

5

DEMOLITION

Demolition activities will include the removal of all structures and site stabilization so that the land can function as natural flood storage, wetlands, or open space.

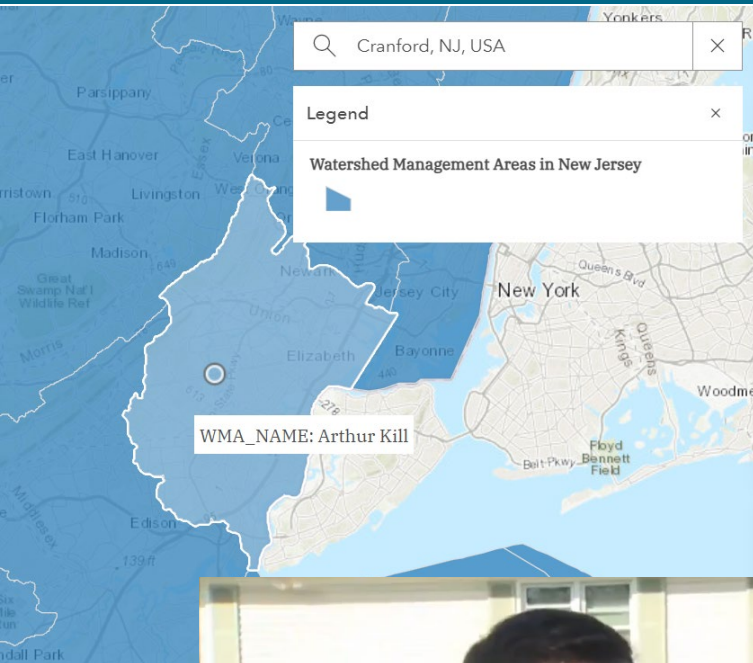
6

SITE RESTORATION

Blue Acres encourages consultations to determine permissible land uses, and identify best practices and potential funding sources for designing and constructing flood-resilient landscapes.



Hurricane Ida, Arthur Kill WMA, and Township of Cranford



Hanson Park Conservancy
September 5, 2021 · 🌐



Cleanup under way after historic flooding in Cranford

The Rahway River flood waters, courtesy of Hurricane Ida stormed through our little park. Water marks left by debris clinging to tree.



Dave Coughlin carries his 1-year-old son Thomas to their car to get him out of their flood-damaged home in Cranford N.J. on Saturday Sept. 4, 2021. Credit: AP/Wayne Parry

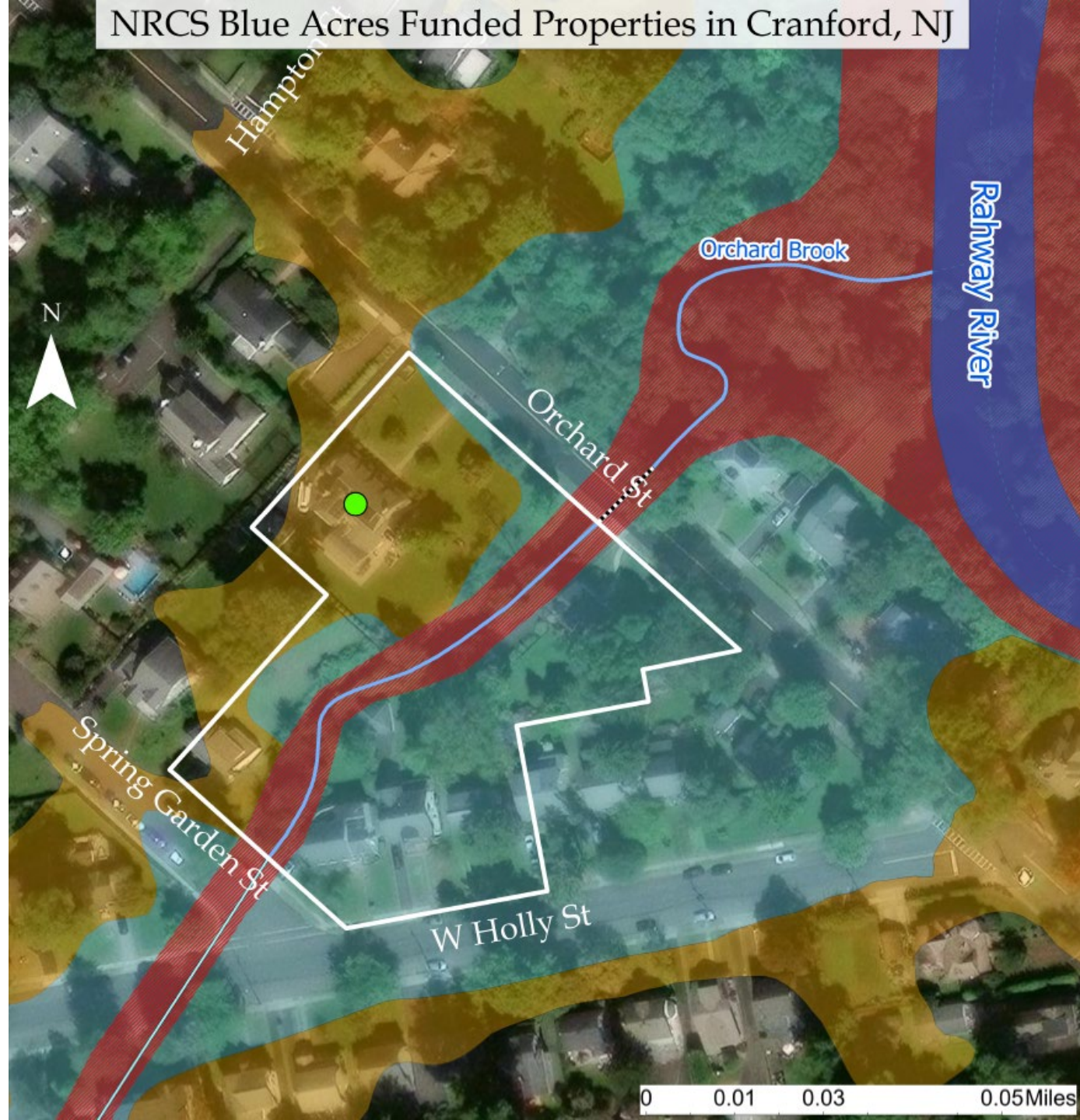
By The Associated Press
November 29, 2024

Roles of Buyout Partners

- **Federal partners (NRCS):** Establish funding opportunities and set eligibility parameters;
- **State partners (DPMC):** Leads demolition for state-acquired structures;
- **Blue Acres:** Serve as project sponsor and conduit of federal monies; Spearheads funding applications, planning, and implementation; Experienced case managers implement the buyout steps of real estate and title transfer
- **Local partners (counties & towns)** Identify and inform DEP of neighborhoods, properties, and residents with substantial flood damage; direct homeowners to apply for buyouts; be primary point of contact for homeowners before a formal buyout begins.
- **Green Acres and DEP OTPLA:** Experienced state acquisition staff provide technical support, including appraisals, title work, and legal oversight
- **Homeowners:** Apply for a buyout; work closely with NJDEP staff and their assigned case managers to navigate buyout process steps.



NRCS Blue Acres Funded Properties in Cranford, NJ



- NRCS Blue Acres Buyout Project Area
- TBD Restoration Easement/Possible Future Buyout

Waterbodies and Stream Networks

- River
- Stream
- Artificial Path
- Connector
- Pipeline

FEMA Flood Hazard Areas

- FLOODWAY
- 100-Year Flood Zone
- 500-Year Flood Zone



Natural Resources Conservation Service

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program Buyouts

EWP has the authority to provide local sponsors with financial assistance to purchase and preserve the land for the purpose of restoring the natural environment.

NRCS may provide project sponsors up to 75 percent:

- the fair market value based on an appraisal for the property,
- eligible acquisition and relocation costs, and
- site restoration costs.

Post-buyout Land Use Opportunities

- Flood storage/buffers
- Environmental restoration
- Passive recreational facilities

Potential Community Groups to Involve in Restoration Activities:

- Master Gardeners
- Local environmental commission
- Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts
- Faith based organizations
- School groups



Future Land-use Visioning



Blue Acres Proposed Design

Community Access & Walking Path

- Create public access and a pervious walking path

Restored Floodplain

- Excavate existing fill (3 - 4 ft) and regrade to restore floodplain hydrology
- Reconnect existing ditch with floodplain
- Plant native coastal trees, shrubs, and grasses

Restored Native Coastal Forest

- Plant native trees and shrubs

Community Open Space

- Plant native trees, grasses, and wildflowers
- Provide park benches and picnic tables

Remove Sidewalk

- Replace sidewalk with native trees and shrubs



Scan the QR Code and provide your e-mail address for updates and opportunities to provide input



Or visit: forms.office.com/g/zhiAgxEgqp



BlueAcres@dep.nj.gov

E-mail your input to Blue Acres using the subject line:
[Cranford NRCS Restoration](#)

Contact



BLUE ACRES

Office of Climate Resilience
NJ Department of
Environmental Protection



BlueAcres@dep.nj.gov



dep.nj.gov/blueacres



609-940-4140

Like & follow us!



@newjerseydep



@nj.dep