



MITIGATION

Minute

JANUARY 2023

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State Hazard Mitigation Plan (HIRA) Update

The Draft HIRA is available on the MT DES website at [MT-2022-Chapter4-WORKING-reduced.pdf](#).

Western Regional Plan Update:

- Mitigation Actions Workshop completed Jan. 17-20
- Update status on past mitigation actions
- Continue building new actions

Central Regional Plan Update:

- Working on draft plan

Eastern Regional Plan Update:

- Mitigation Action Workshop to be held April 3-7
- Upcoming Eastern Mitigation Action Workshops:
 - April 3: Billings*
 - April 4: Sidney*
 - April 5: Wolf Point*
 - April 6: Miles City*
 - April 7: Billings*

Watch for additional HIRA Information coming soon!



WEBSITE: [DES.MT.GOV](https://des.mt.gov)

Plains Wastewater Treatment Plant Relocation

The town of Plains, Montana is close to completing a major infrastructure project which includes moving their wastewater treatment plant to an area outside of the Clark Fork River floodplain. After record floods in the spring of 2018 changed the channel of the Clark Fork River, the former location of Plains' Wastewater Treatment Plant had become increasingly under threat.

In just the last 25 years, 240 feet of riverbank has been lost to the river.

During the record floods in 2018, the lagoons were wholly surrounded by floodwaters, and the Clark Fork Basin snow melt caused flooding that spread the river out over several miles and nearly cut through the small peninsula where the plant was located.

According to Shari Johnson, Plains Town Engineer, "If the river had breached Plains' Wastewater Treatment Plant during the flood event, the results would have been catastrophic.



Without an alternative means to treat the 100,000 gallons of sewage generated daily, the Town would have been forced to choose between direct raw sewage discharge to the river or shutting down sewer service to the entire town including residents, business, schools, and the only hospital in Sanders County." Although the project was vital to the town of Plains and the environment, coordinating and funding such a major infrastructure project was no small task. Ultimately, the funding for the project was secured through multiple agencies, including an award of more than \$5.1 million from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Other funding sources included the US Army Core of Engineers (USACE), the Department of Natural Resources (DNRC), the Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP), the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and a State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan.

Johnson said, "Anna Miller at DNRC has been a champion helping us to identify funding partners including the FEMA BRIC grant."

Plains Sewage Treatment

In addition, Senators Tester's and Daines' offices supported the project efforts from beginning to end, and the Design Engineer, Morrison & Maierle, went above and beyond, helping to meet critical deadlines throughout the course of the project, Johnson stated.

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"IT IS A GREAT PROGRAM. ALL AGENCIES, LOCAL,
STATE, AND FEDERAL WORKED TOGETHER AS BEST
AS I HAVE EVER EXPERIENCED."

~ *Plains Town Engineer, Shari Johnson*

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Engineers anticipate construction and relocation of the new facility to be completed this winter. The new treatment plant, which is located on a 10-acre property outside of the floodplain, includes new lagoons and an ultraviolet disinfection system. As an added benefit, the relocation and new facilities will provide cost-saving features. According to Johnson, "The Town was able to upgrade old equipment and focus on energy conservation and low maintenance costs. Most critically, the relocation will minimize the risk of future floods breaching the lagoon system and creating substantial environmental threats."

The existing wastewater treatment plant with its four lagoons was built roughly a decade ago and will be demolished once the new plant is fully operational.

UPCOMING TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS

L0212: HMA Developing Quality Applications
Billings, MT (Physical Location TBD)
May 2-5, 2023

MT Geohazards Workshop
Ft. Harrison, MT
April 26-27, 2023

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