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August 30, 2023

RE: CRS Activity 510 Annual Floodplain Management Progress Report

This document is being provided to you to satisfy the requirements of our annual CRS Program (Community Rating System) recertification process. The CRS Program is a set of higher regulatory standards that we participate in to reduce the risk of flood damage and increase resiliency to storms and other natural disasters. By participating in this voluntary program, we have strategically elected to go above certain minimum FEMA regulatory requirements and standards. By enforcing these higher regulatory standards, the citizens of Craven County receive a 10% discount to their flood insurance premiums.

The County along with its municipalities, as well as the other jurisdictions located within the Pamlico Sound Region completed the *Pamlico Sound Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan* which was adopted by the County Board of Commissioners on May 18, 2020 and certified by FEMA thereafter. The plan outlines all CRS requirements and activities we participate in that impact the County's scoring under our current CRS review period. The County continues to implement all activities related to floodplain mitigation and management as outlined within the Plan, as well as the County's CRS activities outlined under the last audit visit.

The document attached is the progress report on the implementation of the credited plan (Pamlico Sound Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan) activities. Activities outlined in this plan are the guiding principles of the things we do as a County to achieve resiliency in the preparation and response to flooding and other natural disasters, as well as recovery from these events. These items are addressed within the *Pamlico Sound Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan* and serve as action items that we address as a community daily.

**Community Rating System (CRS) ACTIVITY 510
Progress Report on Implementation of Credited Plan**

Date This Report Was Prepared: August 20, 2023

Name of Community: Craven County

Name of Plan: *Pamlico Sound Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan*

Date of Adoption of Plan: May 18, 2020

5 Year CRS Expiration Date: September 14, 2023

1. How can a copy of the original plan or area analysis report be obtained:
A copy of our *Pamlico Sound Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan* can be found on the County's website www.cravencountync.gov. A copy of this plan can also be viewed at the Craven County Planning Department located at 2828 Neuse Blvd. New Bern, NC 28560.

2. Describe how this evaluation report was prepared and how it was submitted to the governing body, released to the media and made available to the public:
This report was prepared by the Craven County Planning staff with assistance from our consultants at Insight Planning. As required by CRS Activity 510 the report was provided to the Clerk to the Board which was then delivered to the County Commissioners through their individual mailboxes at the County Administration Building. A copy of this activity was also provided to our Public Information Officer who will place this document on our website as a press release for the public to view. In addition to the above submittals, we have also emailed this document to our publishing contact at our local newspaper The Sun Journal.

3. Provide a description of the implementation on each recommendation or action item in the action plan or area analysis report, including a statement on how the project was implemented or not implemented during the previous year:
Action Item #'s CR7; CR10; CR11; CR14; CR18; CR19; of the *Pamlico Sound Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan* (ANNEX 6. C.4 Mitigation Strategies pg. 452 through 454) are implemented through County policy on an ongoing basis. These strategies, as defined in our Hazard Mitigation Plan, provide the platform for a large portion of our flood plain regulation(s), preparedness, and response. We have had great success with these items, particularly in advance notification aspects such as mail outs, door to door handouts and our codeRED notification system. The above referenced items help our County become more resilient to future flooding and natural disaster events particularly enforcing our regulatory 2' freeboard for all new single-family homes or substantially improved/damaged homes.

Action # CR1- Craven County has recently begun the process of identifying areas of the county that are subject to wildfire in relation to the Wildlife Urban Interface (WUI). After the Great Lakes Fire threatened residential areas within the WUI, meetings between the County and the US Forest Service began to help assist in raising awareness and educate the public of the threat of wildfire. The Craven County Planning Department has also begun to partner with the US Forestry Service and members of Firewise.org to research building methods and common everyday practices, such as landscape practices and fence material, that lead to better resiliency to wildfire. Materials are now available in our lobby for the public.

Action # CR2- On June 1st, 2020 the Craven County Board of Commissioners adopted the revised Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, with the associated new Flood Insurance Rate Maps. The adoption date was set to coincide with the States mandated June 19th, 2020 deadline in order to have our revised ordinance match the effective date of the new flood maps. These new updates were based on the State model ordinance with only a few exceptions that were unique to Craven County such as: Freeboard requirements and the addition of VE Zones within our Jurisdiction. On July 6, 2021, Craven County amended all development ordinances to remain in compliance with general statute updates from the State, which included the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance. Since our County wide mandatory changes went into effect on June 19, 2020 Craven County has only been impacted by outside jurisdictions, that we share flood panels with, that did not approve their flood maps at the same time as Craven County. Once these shared panels were approved by outside jurisdictions, such as Riverbend, our Ordinance auto adopted these panel changes so no public notification or Board of Commissioners approval was required at that time. The auto adoption language was placed within our Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance by the Board to address these shared flood panels to remain in constant compliance with FEMA. The new effective panel date for Craven County is 6/15/2023.

Action Item # CR3- Craven County is currently in the research and development stage of a local stormwater ordinance for the regulation of stormwater pertaining to certain development activities. Craven County has been mandated by the State through the North Carolina Division of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) to begin enforcing its own stormwater regulations, which in the past was administered by the Division of Environmental Quality. Craven County has been involved in numerous meetings with members of NCDEQ as well as other surrounding counties and municipalities within the Neuse-Tar-Pamlico River Basin to assist in the development of a stormwater ordinance for Craven County. The Environmental Management Commission has approved the Neuse-Tar-Pamlico Model Program that was presented to them on March 11, 2021 and on March 14, 2022 Craven County officially submitted all draft ordinance materials to be reviewed by the NC Department of Environmental Quality. Craven County is projected to have an ordinance in place for enforcement sometime in 2024. In order to prepare for this new program Craven County has hired a part-time engineer with extensive experience in stormwater management to help administer this program.

Action Item # CR4- Proposals to the State have been made to remove County infrastructure out of the flood zone either through either relocation or elevation methods. To date we have elevated utilities within our Emergency Operations Center that was prone to flooding during heavy rainfall events or natural disasters. Craven County is currently retrofitting our well sites and water plant with a SCADA system for better communication with our wells during flood events. This technology will allow us to have reliable communication and control over the water system during disaster events.

Action Item # CR5- Craven County has been active in seeking out grant funding to help in the assistance of mitigating RL properties throughout the County. We recently elevated 12 residential homes that were flooded by Hurricane Florence through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) 4393 funds and 4 homes through the Disaster Recovery Program (DR-NC 4465 Hurricane Dorian) are scheduled for elevation in the fall of 2023. To date Craven County has sought additional grants through disaster recovery funds such as DR-NC 4412 (Tropical Storm Michael) and HMGP-4568 (Hurricane Isaias) for the assistance in mitigation of properties that did not qualify under HMGP 4393 Florence. Combined these proposals will seek to mitigate

Action Item # CR6- Craven County employs a “CodeRed”, a reverse 9-1-1 call network, to notify citizens of emergencies including hurricane warnings. To receive these notifications, you must register your address and telephone number in which you will receive messages through the County’s website under the Emergency Operations page. If you have special needs, you must fill out a Special Needs Registry form if you would like to be added to this list. This may be done through the County’s website or by calling the Craven County Social Services Department at 252-636-4900.

Action Item # CR8- After Hurricane Florence Craven County has had a unique opportunity to assess how our critical facilities functioned both during and after the storm event. We determined that there are several areas in which the County sees as opportunities to become more resilient to these types of disasters.

Action Item # CR9- Most of the County’s critical facilities are outside of the regulatory floodplain and are largely not subject to localized drainage issues. Over time as drainage basins change or become increasingly taxed due to development and more impervious surface, flooding issues are always a possibility. Knowing this requires us to continuously monitor these situations in the event access is restricted to these facilities. During large wind or rain events power outages are somewhat difficult to manage due to the placement of transmission lines. Transmission lines that run through densely vegetated areas, often located in hydric soils subject to flooding, are often at times inaccessible during a large rain event. The inability for power companies to access downed utility lines in these areas often increases the outage duration for certain areas of the County. Knowing this Craven County has applied and been awarded federal grant money to install generators at 4 strategic school locations that often serve as community shelters to continue operations before, during and after disaster events to assist those who are impacted by the longer outage times.

Action Item # CR12- This strategy is currently being developed to address the issue of information distribution to the citizens of Craven County via our County website. Currently, daily fire risk is posted along US HWY 70 near the Wildlife Station and wildfire prevention flyers are being provided to our department for local dispersal from our office. The Pamlico Sound Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan has extensive information within the document that summarizes the potential impact of wildfires to the region as well as in depth analysis of impact to local municipalities.

Action Item # CR13- Craven County employs a “CodeRed”, a reverse 9-1-1 call network, to notify citizens of emergencies including hurricane warnings. To receive these notifications, you must register your address and telephone number in which you will receive messages through the County’s website under the Emergency Operations page. If you have special needs, you must fill out a Special Needs Registry form if you would like to be added to this list. This may be done through the County’s website or by calling the Craven County Social Services Department at 252-636-4900

Action Item # CR15- Craven County has developed a “Know Your Zone” application which is a tiered evacuation system that highlights areas most vulnerable to impacts from hurricanes,

tropical storms, and other hazards. Along with the North Carolina Department of Public Safety the Know Your Zone look up tool is a color-coded interactive map that you can use to determine the evacuation zone for where you live, work or visiting within the 20 coastal counties based upon the street address. You can access this information through the County's website or by using the Know Your Zone online tool at the North Carolina Department of Public Safety. In the event of an evacuation, local officials will determine which zones to be evacuated first, as well as which zones will not be evacuated. Sheltering and evacuation procedures are based upon the individual disaster and is consistently updated and released via the County website as well as disbursed to the local media.

Action Item # CR16- The Craven County Planning Department has 2 Certified Floodplain Managers on staff as well as a Floodplain Administrator. Flood zone determinations are provided to the public daily and are logged into an excel spreadsheet for record keeping. The Flood Determination Log records information such as: date of request, address of property, parcel ID number, FIRM map and panel number, flood zones affecting the property, Base Flood Elevation (BFE), notification of flood insurance, depth of BFE, Repetitive Loss Property information and if the property is in a sensitive/wetland area. Craven County also requires Flood Development Permits for any proposed development within the Regulatory Flood Zone to assist in the continuous documentation of all impacts within these areas.

Action Item # CR17- The County is very involved in public education and strives to release as much information to our citizens as possible. Materials dedicated to floodplain development are available on our website as well as readily available within the lobby of the Craven County Planning Department and the local library. Craven County, on an annual basis, mails outreach letters to our local realtors, mortgage lenders, insurance providers and propane tank installers in efforts to educate them about responsible floodplain development as well as services provided to them by the County. Upon request, our staff will provide additional material and give presentations to other organizations to help keep them up to date on flood development regulations.

Action Item # CR20- Craven County has begun its partnership with a nationwide firm of planning, design and construction professionals known as Dewberry. This partnership will help facilitate the development of a North Carolina Resilient Coastal Communities Program (NCRCC) to help build resiliency towards natural hazards. The focus of this program will help communities maintain a quality of life, support healthy growth and durable systems while placing focus on the conservation of resources. Though many strategies within the Hurricane Matthew Resilient Redevelopment Plan have been studied and some implemented, this document will serve as one of the foundations for the development of this new North Carolina Resilient Coastal Communities Program. The mitigation opportunities outlined within the Hurricane Mathew Resilient Redevelopment Plan will provide the NCRCCP with project opportunities to assist in the mitigation efforts within the County. Currently Craven County has been selected for Phase 3 funding for the NCRCCP in which we will begin the process of funding a nature-based solution project on public

lands to improve the quality of life of our citizens by establishing natural solutions to help control soil erosion, environmental degradation and combat the effects of sea level rise.

Action Item # CR21- Craven County has secured \$1.4 million dollars through the Golden Leaf Foundation for the placement of 4 generators at strategic school site, which include Havelock Elementary, James W. Smith, Vanceboro Farm Life and West Craven Middle School. Currently 3 of the 4 generator sites have been completed with the 4th scheduled to be completed in 2024. We will continue to seek funding through NCEM and FEMA for resiliency opportunities within our communities to assist in the operation of critical facilities during a disaster event.

4. Discuss why any objectives were not reached or why implementation is behind schedule:
Most incomplete strategies within the *Pamlico Sound Hazard Mitigation Plan* are due to lack of funding. Craven County is currently looking toward grant opportunities to help assist in funding these proposed projects within this report and to better address all “action” items outlined in the Pamlico Sound Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

5. What are the recommendations for new projects or revised recommendations?
Craven County has been actively seeking to become more resilient in our preparedness, response, and recovery during times of crisis, more specifically by way of Natural Disasters. By addressing inadequacies in the placement and resilience of our infrastructure we can better serve the citizens of Craven County. Craven County will continue to apply for funds to help mitigate residential structures in our community, however over time it has become a priority to reassess the County’s needs in becoming more resilient to flooding and other storm events in terms of our critical infrastructure. With new partnerships, studies and grants we are confident that Craven County will continue to lead in areas of mitigation to be better prepared and resilient to natural disasters now and into the future.