

Flood Recovery Task Force, Inc. Progress Report,  
1973, November 21

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**FLOOD RECOVERY TASK FORCE, INC.**

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WILKES COLLEGE

TO: The Executive Committee of the Flood Recovery Task Force

NOV 21 1973

President's Office

FROM: Flood Recovery Task Force Staff

DATE: November 19, 1973

RE: Progress Report on Flood Recovery Task Force - sponsored action programs designed to help Wyoming Valley recover from the Agnes disaster as fully and as speedily as possible.

1. HOUSING PROGRAM

Consultant: Direction Associates

Objectives:

- I. Present statistical information and projections about the housing situation in Wyoming Valley.
- II. Develop programs designed to reduce or eliminate governmental disincentives to construction of new housing in Wyoming Valley.
- III. Present three case studies of solutions other areas have found to housing problems involving difficult topography or flood plain situations.
- IV. Analyze the cause and effect relationship between the region's economy and its housing situations.
- V. Show specific findings and recommendations in the context of: the present to 1975; 1975 to 1980; 1980 to 1985.

The work the Consultant has done thus far in fulfillment of his contract has been in connection with its Section I. Specifically, he has concentrated on preparing a survey of the financing sources available to housing developers, housing authorities and housing agencies interested in new construction in the Wyoming Valley. He has submitted a draft report on this aspect of his work to the Task Force staff, and he is currently incorporating their comments into a formal report. Section I will be presented to the Task Force by the end of the year.

The Task Force has formed an Advisory Committee on Housing to ensure that the various approaches to the region's housing problems being taken by organizations and agencies seeking their solution are coordinated. This Committee held its first meeting on October 30th (minutes attached).

## 2. PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

Consultant: Wilbur Smith and Associates

Objective:

- I. Conduct a public opinion survey to determine the attitudes of Wyoming Valley residents towards their local government, and, to a limited degree, towards the local housing situation and the region's appearance and image.

The Consultant submitted a list of questions designed to elicit the information desired to the Task Force, and then incorporated staff comments into the final version of the survey questionnaire. Jim Forth of Wilbur Smith and Associates trained approximately 30 Wilkes and Kings students in interviewing techniques and assigned them to poll 1600 Valley residents who had been selected scientifically to produce a true sample of local opinion. Forth supervised the student interviewers throughout the duration of the poll. There was virtually no negative response to the survey. Its results are presently being analyzed by the Consultant who plans to issue a preliminary report on its results in mid-December.

## 3. AREA APPEARANCE AND IMAGE WORK PROGRAM

Consultant: Wilbur Smith and Associates

Objectives:

- I. To identify and recommend action on those areawide appearance and image factors which impede economic growth and development in the Wyoming Valley.
- II. To design a workable, pilot, appearance and image improvement project for a specific area of the Valley (probably a municipality).

On October 29th, several teams of Wilbur Smith and Associates personnel began a major inventory of physical aspects of the study region. Having divided the region into seven districts, teams drove over the main, secondary, and tertiary roads in each district carefully recording their visual impressions in terms of neighborhoods (stable; predominately old or new houses; etc.) nodal points (major concentrations of commercial development), strip commercial, culm piles, junk yards, pasture and dairy lands, actual and potential tourist attractions, green belts and the like.

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On November 7th, Wilbur Smith and Associates met with Flood Recovery Task Force staff to make a preliminary report on this project. They presented and explained completed maps and pointed out that the maps make it possible to get an excellent impression of the visual characteristics of any particular area of the Valley at a glance.

These Wilbur Smith teams will be working on detailed areas of the region and will be in touch with Flood Recovery Task Force staff about these at the end of November.

