



A Resource of the State of Florida

**HURRICANE LOSS REDUCTION
FOR
RESIDENCES AND MOBILE HOMES
IN FLORIDA**

**A Research Project Funded by
The State of Florida Department of Community Affairs
Through Contract 01-RC-11-13-00-22-004**

QUALITATIVE PERSON TO PERSON SURVEY
SURVEY INSTRUMENT AND SAMPLING PLAN

DELIVERABLE #5
DUE BY APRIL 15, 2001

PREPARED BY
THE INTERNATIONAL HURRICANE CENTER
FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

PURPOSE

In order to fulfill the objectives of the project titled “Hurricane Loss Reduction for Residences and Mobile Homes in Florida” the Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has tasked the International Hurricane Center (IHC) and a multi-university team from the State University System of Florida (SUS) to pursue five specific research tracks relating to hurricane loss reduction devices and techniques for residences and mobile homes relating to the development of credible data on potential loss reduction.

The IHC and its SUS team have been requested to emphasize research designed to identify the *scope of the problem* including the range of factors, from physical and structural to the social and regulatory, that may contribute to or influence hurricane losses for residences and mobile homes in the State of Florida.

The main objectives of this research effort will be to assess the absolute and relative vulnerability of the housing stock in Florida with an emphasis on mobile homes, and to gain as clear an understanding as possible on the issues that may act as barriers or motivations to hurricane loss mitigation, and to identify those issues that are relevant to DCA and others in Florida.

Identifying the scope of the problem under the parameters described above requires a combination of quantitative and qualitative research.

In order to identify factors that may contribute to, or influence hurricane losses, or to understand how some factors or issues may be incentives for or barriers to hurricane mitigation, it essential to hear from those whose behavior and well-being may affect such factors and issues.

The person-to-person qualitative survey provides a venue for contacting individuals, such as mobile home residents/homeowners or mobile home park owner/managers, who can provide valuable information for this research effort.

This report includes the survey instrument that has already been used to complete interviews in various regions of the state. The report also describes the methodology and plan followed for these interviews. By May 15, 2001 the IHC will submit a preliminary report on findings from this qualitative person-to-person survey.

This report has been prepared in compliance with the deliverable requirements of DCA Contract Number 01-RC-11-13-00-22-004 executed September 8, 2000 and modified

through Amendment #1 executed January 18, 2001. This report specifically complies with deliverable #5 of said contract, due April 15, 2001, which reads as follows:

By April 15, 2001, the Contractor shall submit in both hard copy and electronic format a survey instrument [for a Qualitative Person-to-Person survey] and sampling plan to the Department.

FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS

In order to better understand the context in which mobile home households make decisions related to hurricane mitigation, preparation and evacuation, it is important to better understand the essence of mobile home living. Since this is an unstudied area, not enough was known about the circumstances of mobile home living in Florida to inform the preparation of a survey instrument for more quantitative analysis of a large sample as a first step. It was important to begin with qualitative methodologies – in this case in-depth interviewing and observing in mobile home parks. To this end 12 mobile home parks around the state were visited and 120 interviews conducted with residents in their homes. Twelve park managers were also interviewed to get their perspectives on the households within their parks, as well as information about their parks, including hurricane warning and preparation activities, evacuation procedures, sheltering information, insurance information, costs associated with living in their parks, zoning issues and future plans for the parks.

In a desire to get some understanding about how the circumstances might vary throughout the state, Betty Morrow, director of this part of the project, made the decision to sample four regions of the state: Tampa, Gainesville, Tallahassee and South Florida. Affiliates of the Lab for Social and Behavioral Research of the International Hurricane Center were used in each location: the field managers were Dr. Anthony Oliver-Smith at the University of Florida, Dr. Jay Baker at Florida State University, Linda Callejas (a graduate student associated with the Lab), and Betty Morrow. A meeting of the field directors was held in Miami and two sets of open-ended questions were prepared: one for park managers and one for residents. Since human subjects were involved, the questions and protocols were submitted to the Institutional Review Boards at FIU and UF and were granted exemption from full review.

At each location the field director chose three parks to reflect diversity in terms of location and type of residents, interviewed the park managers, created a sampling plan, and arranged for interviews to be conducted with 10 residents in each park. In some cases flyers and/or other publicity preceded the students visits to promote agreement to

Insert Field Study Map Here

participate. Students then visited the homes of the sample in each park, recording their observations about the park and its residents, until they had completed 10 interviews.

All transcripts from the interviews are in the process of being transcribed, coded and analyzed, using NUD*ST software. Preliminary analysis has formed the basis for the first draft of the questionnaire to be used in the telephone survey to be conducted with a larger, randomly selected statewide sample.

What is most noteworthy is that unlike survey questions for telephone interviews, as the following survey instruments reveal, no possible answers are given to the person being interviewed. According to Therese L. Baker in her research textbook, Doing Social Research (McGraw-Hill, 1999), “open-ended questions state a question and leave room for the respondent to answer” (p. 209) in his or her own words. Close-ended questions, on the other hand, force respondents to make a choice from specified options. These close-ended questions are the majority of the questions being used for the telephone survey as part of this project. (See Deliverable #3 for survey instrument)

The results of the two types of studies vary as well. Whereas the telephone survey will allow us to use statistics and quantify how mobile home households respond to the various questions, these field studies allow us to construct meaning from social environments. Not only do the researchers interview based on the interview schedules, they observe surroundings and interact with those they are talking to. This allows interviews to probe for more detailed responses or even to probe for clarification. As you will see on the two interview schedules to follow, probing is a vital aspect of the interviewing process.

Overall this methodology allows us to gather rich information that can help inform the development of more structured surveys, such as the telephone survey for this project. Field studies are particularly key when examining groups or issues that have not been the subject of much research. Such is the case with mobile home households and parks in Florida.

FACE-TO-FACE SURVEY – OPEN-ENDED SURVEY QUESTIONS

MOBILE HOME RESIDENTS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

[Introduce self and the project. Ask for permission to record the interview.]

I. INFORMATION ABOUT THE HOME

- a. Address, Size, Type and Age of Unit
- b. Tenancy: Own or rent?
- c. How many years have you lived in this unit?
- d. Did you live in mobile homes prior to that? [Get history.]
- e. Do you have cable TV? Do you get the Weather Channel?
- f. How many years have you lived in this park?
- g. What facilities are in the park?
- h. Laundry? Community center? Etc.
- i. Why did you choose this park?
- j. What are its advantages? Disadvantages?
- k. How would you describe the residents here?
- l. Do you live here all year? If not, when are you here?
- m. When gone, do you have someone who could prepare the home in case of an emergency?

II. ATTITUDES ABOUT MOBILE HOMES

- a. What made you choose this type of housing? [Probe for reasons.]
- b. What do you like about it?
- c. What don't you like about it?
- d. How many years would you expect a mobile home to be livable?
- e. Do you expect your next home to be a mobile home?
- f. Why or why not?

III. HOUSING COSTS

Renters:

- a. How much rent do you pay and what does it include?

Owners:

- b. How much do you pay to have your unit here and what does it include?
- c. Could you tell me when you purchased your home? New or used?
- d. About how much did it cost?
- e. Do you currently have a mortgage? Do you know the interest rate?
- f. About how much is your monthly payment?
- g. Does that payment include taxes and insurance?
- h. If you were to sell it now, what do you think you could get?
- i. If you were to rent it, what do you think you would get?

Both Renters and Owners:

- j. What types of insurance, if any, do you carry on your home and its furnishings?
- k. Does that include wind insurance? How about flood insurance? [Probe for type and approximate cost. Also what they think it covers.]
- l. All in all, how economical is mobile home living?
- m. If you could live in an apartment equivalent size and cost, would you prefer it?
- n. How about a traditional house?
- o. What keeps you from one of these alternate housing options?

IV. Hazards Safety

- a. Have you had any bad weather events since you've lived in a mobile home?
- b. If you received word that a tornado was in the vicinity, what would (or did) you do?
- c. Do you have a NOAA weather radio? Does it turn itself on?
- d. Does the park have a warning system? If so, has it been used?
- e. Have you experienced a hurricane? While living in a mobile home? While living here? [Probe for details about each event, and their actions related to housing preparation, evacuation, sheltering, etc.]
- f. What about a flood?
- g. How safe is your current home to a hurricane?
- h. How do you feel about this?
- i. What do you know about the manner in which your unit is fastened to the site?
- j. Have you done anything to improve the safety of this unit?

- k. Do you know of anything that could be done to this unit to improve its safety? [Probe.]
- l. If so, what would it take to get it done? [Probe for cost, possible incentives, etc.]
- m. How do you get your hurricane information? [Probe for all sources.]
- n. If your area was threatened by a *hurricane*, what would you do?
- o. Where is the closest approved shelter located? Have you ever used it? Tell me about that.
- p. Would having a shelter inside a mobile home park influence your decision to live there? Explain.
- q. If there was a hurricane shelter in your park, would you use it?

V. DEMOGRAPHICS

- a. Who lives here with you? Get ages, relationships.
- b. Who do you consider the head or heads of this household?
 - i. Could you give me their approximate ages.
- c. Would you please estimate the households' total yearly income?

VI. Future Plans

- a. How long would you expect to continue living here?
- b. Under what conditions would you leave?
- c. [If owner] If you moved, would you sell the unit or take it with you?
 - i. How difficult would it be to sell?
 - ii. When this home gets too old to be livable, what will you do with it?
- d. If there was a program to help owners move into a newer model, would you be interested? What would it take to get you to do this? [Probe.]

In closing, is there anything you would like to ask me about this project?

If we have further questions as this study progresses, may we contact you?

If so, get a phone number: _____

FACE-TO-FACE SURVEY – OPEN-ENDED SURVEY QUESTIONS PARK OWNER/MANAGER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

[If the respondent is the manager, not owner, adjust the questions accordingly to get as much of the information as possible. Try to get contact information on the owner.]

[Introduce self and the project. Ask for permission to record the interview.]

I. INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARK

- a. Address
- b. Age of park, number of mobile homes, ages?
- c. How long owned
- d. What facilities are in the park? Laundry? Community center? Etc.
- e. Get or make map, if possible.
- f. Note property adjacent to the park (all sides): Rural, single homes, businesses, etc.
- g. Do you give residents a list of park rules? [Try to get a copy]
- h. Is the park wired for Cable TV?

II. BUSINESS QUESTIONS

- a. Do you own any of the units?
- b. If not, who does? Are most owner-occupied? (Get proportion)
- c. How many are rented? Any trouble keeping them rented?
- d. Do you have unoccupied lots? How about empty mobile home units?
- e. Are all the lot sizes the same? Are there any regulations regarding how close two mobile homes can be?
- f. What is the zoning situation? Any attempts to change it?
- g. What specific regulatory agencies do you have to deal with on the County and State level?
- h. Have any zoning or ordinance changes affected you?
- i. Is this a good business to be in?
- j. What do you like about it?
- k. What are the major problems?
- l. What are your liabilities in terms of resident safety?
- m. What kinds of insurance, if any, do you carry? Liability? Property? Business interruption? Inquire about coverage and cost.

- n. What is the average lot rental? What does it include? Utilities, etc.
- o. If respondent own units, what is the average rental for a unit? What does that include?
- p. What is your average turnover? (If high or low, why?)

III. RESIDENTS

- a. Who lives in your park? [Try to get some idea of the demographics.]
- b. Age range? Working status? Size of families? Jobs?
- c. Are there any restrictions about who lives here?
- d. Why types of households do you prefer? Probe.
- e. Have you noticed any trends or changes in recent years regarding the residents?
- f. Do people tend to know each other? To socialize?
- g. Are disputes a problem for you? If yes, explain.
- h. Are there any community activities?
- i. Is there any kind of resident (community) organization?
- j. Why do you think people choose to live in mobile homes?

IV HAZARDS

- a. Have you had any bad weather events since you've owned the park?
- b. What would you (or did you) do for a tornado warning?
- c. Do you have a NOAA weather radio? Is it tone activated (turn on by itself)?
- d. If you received a tornado warning, what would you do?
 - i. How would you convey the information to the residents?
 - ii. Do you have sirens that alert people?
 - iii. What would you expect them to do?
- e. If you have a community center or building, has it ever been used as a shelter?
- f. Do you think it is safe? Under what conditions?
- g. Could it be made safer and serve as a shelter?
- h. What do you think of that idea?
- i. What do you do in case of a hurricane? [Probe to see what they know about watches and warnings and evacuation orders]
- j. Do you have an emergency plan for the park?
- k. How do (would) you get the park ready for a hurricane?
- l. Are residents given any hazards safety information?
- m. Have you had a hurricane since you've owned the park? [If so, probe about evacuation, sheltering, etc. for each storm]

- n. Has the park been flooded? If so, was the water high enough to get in the homes?

V. INFORMATION ABOUT MOBILE HOMES IN THE PARK

- a. What kind of information do you keep on each mobile home?
- b. Do you have any information about the age of each home?
- c. How many would you guess were built before 1976?
- d. How many would you guess were built since 1994?
- e. What are some of the maintenance problems?
- f. How do you decide that a home is no longer livable?
- g. Do people do a lot of remodeling of their mobile homes?
- h. Are they required to get permits? How hard is it to get permits?
- i. Are any ever abandoned by the owners?
- j. If so, what do you do with them?
- k. Are they salvaged? [If so, get cost regarding company, process, cost.]
- l. Have you ever heard of a recycling program for old mobile homes?
- m. What would you think of a government recycling program to help replace old homes with newer, safer ones? Does this seem like a good idea?
- n. What incentives would it take to get owners to go for it?
- o. Do you know the zoning restrictions/ requirements for this property?

VI. FUTURE PLANS

- a. What are your future plans regarding the park?
- b. Have you had any offers to buy it?
 - i. If so, was it for the park, or for the land?
- c. What would it take for you to sell it? [Try to get an estimate of its value if possible]
- d. What do you think will happen to this land in the future?
- e. How much longer do you plan to stay in this business?

[Ask if you can call if you have additional questions. Tell them that you would hope to talk with some of the residents about their plans and that you'd like to distribute a flyer explaining the program and telling them they might be contacted by (UF, USF, FSU, FIU) students. What would be the best way? Agree to share a project report with them, if they ask.]

SAMPLING METHODOLOGY

The goal of sampling is to represent as accurately as possible a larger population. When doing quantitative studies where the goal is to analyze the data statistically, sampling randomly to represent this larger population is necessary. This is necessary not only because you want to best represent the larger population, but more important, statistical tests assume a random sample. Without a random sample, using these statistics is not accurate.

However, when a study is more exploratory in nature, such as in this case, using random samples is not required and often not practical. However, despite this, some type of methodology is still necessary in order to minimize possible bias in the sample.

In order to minimize the potential bias, as mentioned earlier, interviews were done in four areas in Florida. These counties were selected in order to interview in parks with varying demographics. Two areas were more “urban,” while the other two were more “rural.” The two urban areas were the Miami and Tampa areas, and the two more rural were Tallahassee and Gainesville.

The field directors in each area were given a list of mobile home parks in those areas. These lists were extracted from mobile home park registration data from the Department of Health. This data included park name, address, number of units and often owner and owner telephone number. Using this data for this basic information, field directors chose three parks from disparate locations in order to represent a wide array of demographics.

Each director interviewed the Park manager, and while there got a map of the park. Using this map, a sample within the park was selected. Where possible, this sample was random. To get the 10 interviews in each park, a sample of 30 was selected. Based on the number of lots in the park, every n th mobile home was chosen for the sample and found on the map. For example, in a park with 900 lots, every 30th mobile home was chosen. Selecting a random number between one and thirty chose the first mobile home. Once this starting point was determined, every 30th mobile home was selected from that point. These selections were done on the map received from the mobile home park manager.

Interviewers went to each mobile home until they got the required 10 households in the park. While the methodology is not perfectly random in many cases, it did help accomplish the goal of getting as varied a set of respondents as possible.