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# Recovery still underway at trailer park damaged in record Antietam flood

A team from AmeriCorps recently helped fix homes at Penn View Mobile Home Park.



AmeriCorps workers install new skirting on a home damaged by the Antietam Creek flood in 2023. From left are Russell Campbell of Maryland, Ruby Meyer of Virginia, Cameron Doll of North Carolina and Kurt Meidenbauer of New York. (BILL UHRICH/READING EAGLE)



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When waist-deep floodwaters tore through her neighborhood in July 2023, Gloria Lee worried that the future she envisioned had been swept away.

“Do I have to leave my home, am I going to be able to do that?” Lee, who lives in Penn View Trailer Park, said of the questions she asked after the [record-breaking flood](#). “Honestly, it was scary.”

The deluge damaged the skirting and insulation under her trailer, one of about 130 mobile homes in Penn View Trailer Park, which sits on low ground near the Antietam Valley Recreation Center.

“I thank God the waters didn’t go any higher,” Lee said.

Floodwaters moving from higher ground converged with the overflowing Antietam Creek, leaving the trailer park in Exeter Township at the mercy of a raging river, said Chuck Parker, construction supervisor with the [Antietam Valley Long Term Recovery](#) group.

“This was probably one of the worst places for it to hit,” Parker said. “People had stuff out, ornaments, flowerbeds, it just floated downstream. There were holes (in the gravel roads) 3 feet deep. It was like a war zone.”



Joe Blanchard looks over his truck that was swept into his neighbor's home and then submerged in a sinkhole caused by the July 2023 flooding of the Antietam Creek. (BILL UHRICH – READING EAGLE)

In addition to sheds, vehicles and anything else in the flood's path, the waters also pulled people downstream, requiring several rescues.

"We're lucky nobody died," Parker said.

Nearly all the Penn View homes were damaged in the flood, Parker said, but property wasn't all that suffered.

"I think the damage right now is still emotional, psychological," Parker said. "What happened to them, a lot of people didn't want to look under the trailer and see what happened. They were afraid to."

Many trailers suffered a similar fate to Lee's home, Parker said, losing vital skirting, insulation and subflooring.

Lacking those components can cause higher heating bills, frozen pipes and even crumbling floors.

For Lee and others in the park, the efforts of the Antietam Valley Long Term Recovery Group and other organizations have been invaluable in keeping homes livable.

But volunteers and disaster relief funds are finite, and the cleanup remains incomplete.

That's why Parker and others have welcomed assistance from groups that have come to the area to help — groups like AmeriCorps, a federal service organization that works like the Peace Corps but within the U.S.

The Antietam Valley recovery group applied to have AmeriCorps lend a hand at Penn View.

A 10-member team from AmeriCorps assigned to the park for a three-week operation finished at the end of March.

The team was from AmeriCorps' [National Civilian Community Corps](#), which gives young adults age 18 to 26 the opportunity to gain experience and travel the U.S. while doing projects related to environmental stewardship, affordable housing, disaster response and more.

They worked on several trailers, installing new insulation and siding, in addition to a project in Fleetwood that involved repairing a flood-damaged home.

Parker noted that without the help, the repairs to each trailer could cost as much as \$10,000 — a tough prospect for the site's many low-income residents.

Ruby Meyer, one of the workers with AmeriCorps, said helping with the flood recovery is the group's first project since finishing training in Iowa.

Meyer said the damage to the trailers they've worked on remained painfully evident even today, more than 1 1/2 years after the flood.

"You can see where the water came in, it's damaged the subflooring, all of the insulation is wet," Meyer said.

The team last week was in the process of pulling out bad insulation and reattaching the skirting.

Meyer noted that the community has welcomed the group with open arms.

"This community has been really, really kind to us," Meyer said. "People feeding us constantly, bringing cakes and pies."

She also thanked Parker for guiding the group with his construction expertise.

Lee said she was grateful for the help she'd received.

“There’s been many, many people who have helped us,” Lee said.  
“Wonderful neighbors and wonderful volunteers.”

The recovery effort has been funded by donations from local churches and the Antietam Valley Community Partnership, as well as the state Disaster Recovery Assistance Program.

Julia Menzo, disaster preparedness and recovery coordinator with faith-based nonprofit [Liberty Lutheran](#), which is associated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and has helped coordinate the recovery effort, noted the group was applying to have another AmeriCorps team to come to Pennsylvania.

The Antietam recovery group will continue working with local volunteers to help with the cleanup, Menzo said.

Parker noted that anyone looking to volunteer is welcome to come and help.

“We accept anybody here,” Parker said.

Meyer said she didn’t think her AmeriCorps team was slated to return to the Antietam Valley during its 10-month service term, but she was thinking about coming back and volunteering on her own.

“This community has been really awesome, and I like the work here,” Meyer said.

The AmeriCorps group’s next stop is in the Philadelphia area, where the team will help repair homes damaged by Hurricane Ida in 2021.

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