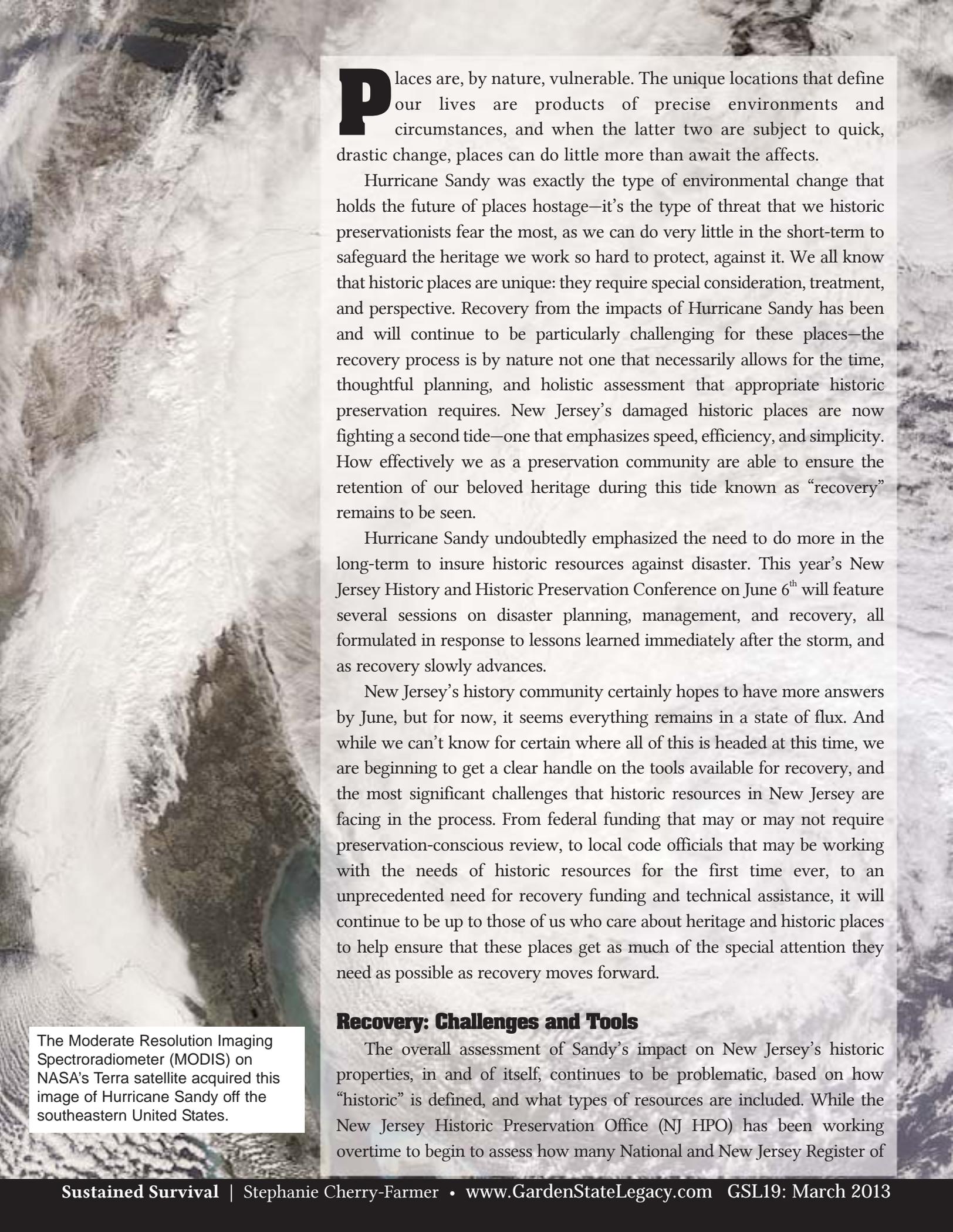


Aerial views of the damage caused by Hurricane Sandy to the New Jersey coast taken during a search and rescue mission by 1-150 Assault Helicopter Battalion, New Jersey Army National Guard, Oct. 30, 2012.

Challenges and Tools for New Jersey's Historic Resources During Hurricane Sandy Recovery

Sustained Survival

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Places are, by nature, vulnerable. The unique locations that define our lives are products of precise environments and circumstances, and when the latter two are subject to quick, drastic change, places can do little more than await the affects.

Hurricane Sandy was exactly the type of environmental change that holds the future of places hostage—it's the type of threat that we historic preservationists fear the most, as we can do very little in the short-term to safeguard the heritage we work so hard to protect, against it. We all know that historic places are unique: they require special consideration, treatment, and perspective. Recovery from the impacts of Hurricane Sandy has been and will continue to be particularly challenging for these places—the recovery process is by nature not one that necessarily allows for the time, thoughtful planning, and holistic assessment that appropriate historic preservation requires. New Jersey's damaged historic places are now fighting a second tide—one that emphasizes speed, efficiency, and simplicity. How effectively we as a preservation community are able to ensure the retention of our beloved heritage during this tide known as “recovery” remains to be seen.

Hurricane Sandy undoubtedly emphasized the need to do more in the long-term to insure historic resources against disaster. This year's New Jersey History and Historic Preservation Conference on June 6th will feature several sessions on disaster planning, management, and recovery, all formulated in response to lessons learned immediately after the storm, and as recovery slowly advances.

New Jersey's history community certainly hopes to have more answers by June, but for now, it seems everything remains in a state of flux. And while we can't know for certain where all of this is headed at this time, we are beginning to get a clear handle on the tools available for recovery, and the most significant challenges that historic resources in New Jersey are facing in the process. From federal funding that may or may not require preservation-conscious review, to local code officials that may be working with the needs of historic resources for the first time ever, to an unprecedented need for recovery funding and technical assistance, it will continue to be up to those of us who care about heritage and historic places to help ensure that these places get as much of the special attention they need as possible as recovery moves forward.

Recovery: Challenges and Tools

The overall assessment of Sandy's impact on New Jersey's historic properties, in and of itself, continues to be problematic, based on how “historic” is defined, and what types of resources are included. While the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office (NJ HPO) has been working overtime to begin to assess how many National and New Jersey Register of

The Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) on NASA's Terra satellite acquired this image of Hurricane Sandy off the southeastern United States.



President Barack Obama and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie talk with local residents at the Brigantine Beach Community Center in Brigantine, N.J., Oct. 31, 2012. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)

Historic Places-listed properties were affected by the storm, the listed resources are only a fraction of the true picture. The amount of potential victims expands dramatically if one includes resources determined by NJ HPO to be eligible for the New Jersey or National Registers, and even more dramatically if those resources deemed potentially eligible are included.

And that's not all.

Add to that all the resources that have been surveyed at the county or municipal level, but not necessarily reported to NJ HPO. Finally, consider the myriad of resources that may meet the age, integrity, and significance thresholds for official designation as "historic," but have simply never been officially identified, surveyed, or recorded, and you begin to get a true picture of the number of historic places that were impacted by Hurricane Sandy.

Many of these will likely never be added to any official count, as that count will only include damage that was officially reported or otherwise recorded. Damage that was easily repairable likely was not reported, and furthermore, the owners of resources that could be historic, but have never been officially designated as such, often don't even realize that their property is unique or know what the term "historic" really means, and therefore would never have considered reporting damage to a preservation entity. While we will eventually have a ballpark figure, based on NJ HPO assessments, the claims records of agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Small Business Administration



Old Orchard Shoal Lighthouse in the waters off Staten Island, in the Raritan Bay, was destroyed on October 29, 2012. Nothing is left. It was built in 1893.

(SBA), and local (Historic Preservation Commission, code official) knowledge of historic resources pre- and post-Sandy, we will never be able to accurately quantify just how detrimental Hurricane Sandy was to New Jersey's built heritage.

In November, NJ HPO staff began surveying damaged communities along with FEMA Cultural Resource Specialists. Thus far, they have completed "windshield surveys" of 80 communities. The goal of this initial round of surveying was to delineate "go zones" wherein storm damage occurred, but no apparent historic properties exist. FEMA-funded projects will now be permitted to move forward without concern regarding impacts to cultural resources in these zones. Meanwhile, the zones which were determined to contain historic or potentially historic resources will be more intensively surveyed and many of the federally funded projects therein will be subject to Section 106 review to avoid or mitigate any adverse effects these projects may have on historic properties.

Section 106 review, as an element of Hurricane Sandy recovery, will be unique. "Section 106" refers to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which requires federal agencies to consider the effects on historic properties of projects they carry out, approve, or fund. It is a significant opportunity for public and history community input on federally funded projects, as it provides groups with a demonstrated interest in a project the opportunity to consult on that project, thereby potentially influencing its outcome. As a significant portion of recovery activities will be at least partially federally funded, Section 106 will play a very active role in the Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts. For now, it is important that the history community "stay tuned" with regard to participation in Sandy-related Section 106 consultation. FEMA is currently finalizing the Programmatic Agreement that will govern some of that agency's Sandy-related Section 106 review activity; a draft was released for public comment February 19, and a final agreement is expected shortly. Once this Programmatic Agreement is finalized, certain Section 106 review projects



Lucy the Margate Elephant was spared major damage despite being near the coast.

will be able to move forward, and historical societies, local community groups, and even individuals with an interest in and knowledge of historic places in the damaged areas may soon be able to play a vital role as consulting or interested parties to those reviews.

Section 106 reviews will also be an element of projects funded using non-FEMA federal recovery dollars. Encouragingly, additional relief money that will play a major role in assisting specifically with the repair and restoration of historic resources damaged by Hurricane Sandy has been approved. A \$50 million one-time appropriation from the federal Historic Preservation Fund, modeled after a similar Historic Preservation Fund appropriation in response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005, was passed as an element of the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013 signed into law on January 29. Despite amendments that threatened to eliminate this funding, or require that any grants distributed from it be matched, thanks to advocacy by Preservation Action, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and partners including Preservation New Jersey, this funding will soon be available specifically for the recovery of historic resources located in federally-designated disaster areas in the Northeast. As the entire state of New Jersey was declared a disaster area, resources statewide will qualify for this assistance. The \$50 million appropriation will be distributed through state historic preservation offices, mostly in the form of grants to National Register of Historic Places-listed or eligible properties and districts. Right now, NJ HPO is working with the National Park Service to determine how much of that funding will in fact be available to our state, and secure a timeline and structure for distribution.



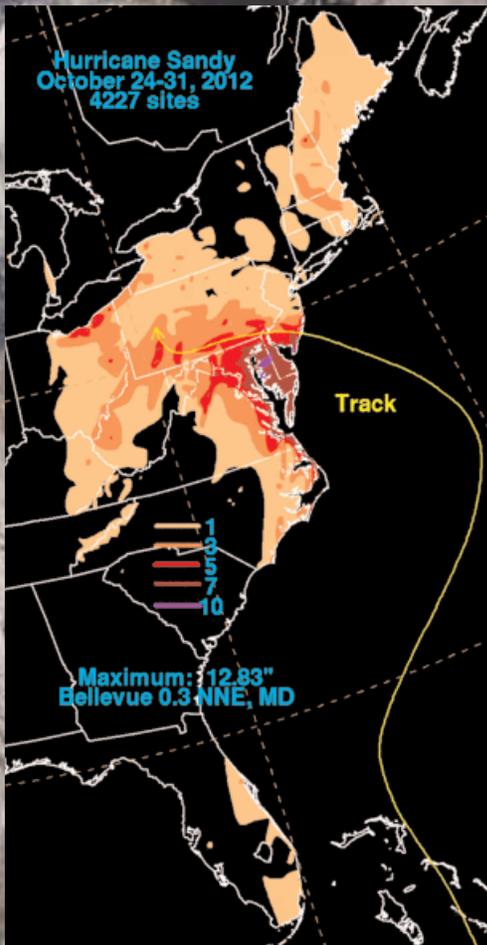


Tree damage at the Jacob Ford Mansion in Morristown National Historical Park. (Courtesy The History Girl)

Additionally, the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013 included \$16 billion in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. This funding will be allocated to states affected by Hurricane Sandy in multiple phases as determined by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. New Jersey received an allocation of \$1.83 billion during the initial round of CDBG funding allocations on February 6. The State of New Jersey, via the Department of Community Affairs, must now submit an action plan for disaster recovery within 90 days of the allocation, including criteria for eligibility and how the use of these funds will address disaster relief, long-term recovery, restoration of infrastructure and housing and economic revitalization in the most impacted and distressed areas. We understand that the states will have significant leverage in determining how these funds are used, and as such, there may be an opportunity for a portion of this allocation to be used for historic preservation needs. State-level preservation partners are currently working with the Department of Community Affairs to advocate for the dedication of a portion of these funds to the recovery of historic places.

The Bigger Picture

From a statewide preservation standpoint, addressing the needs of individual historic sites is just one element of the recovery equation. Many questions remain about the recovery of neighborhoods, communities, and regional context. What does the future look like in communities like Mantoloking, where, of the 525 buildings that comprised the borough before the storm, 135 were destroyed, an estimated 56 are partially underwater in the bay, and around 100 are entirely or partially off-foundation? There are



Total rainfall for the United States caused by Hurricane Sandy. While the coastal regions suffered flooding from storm surge, inland was battered by record high winds.

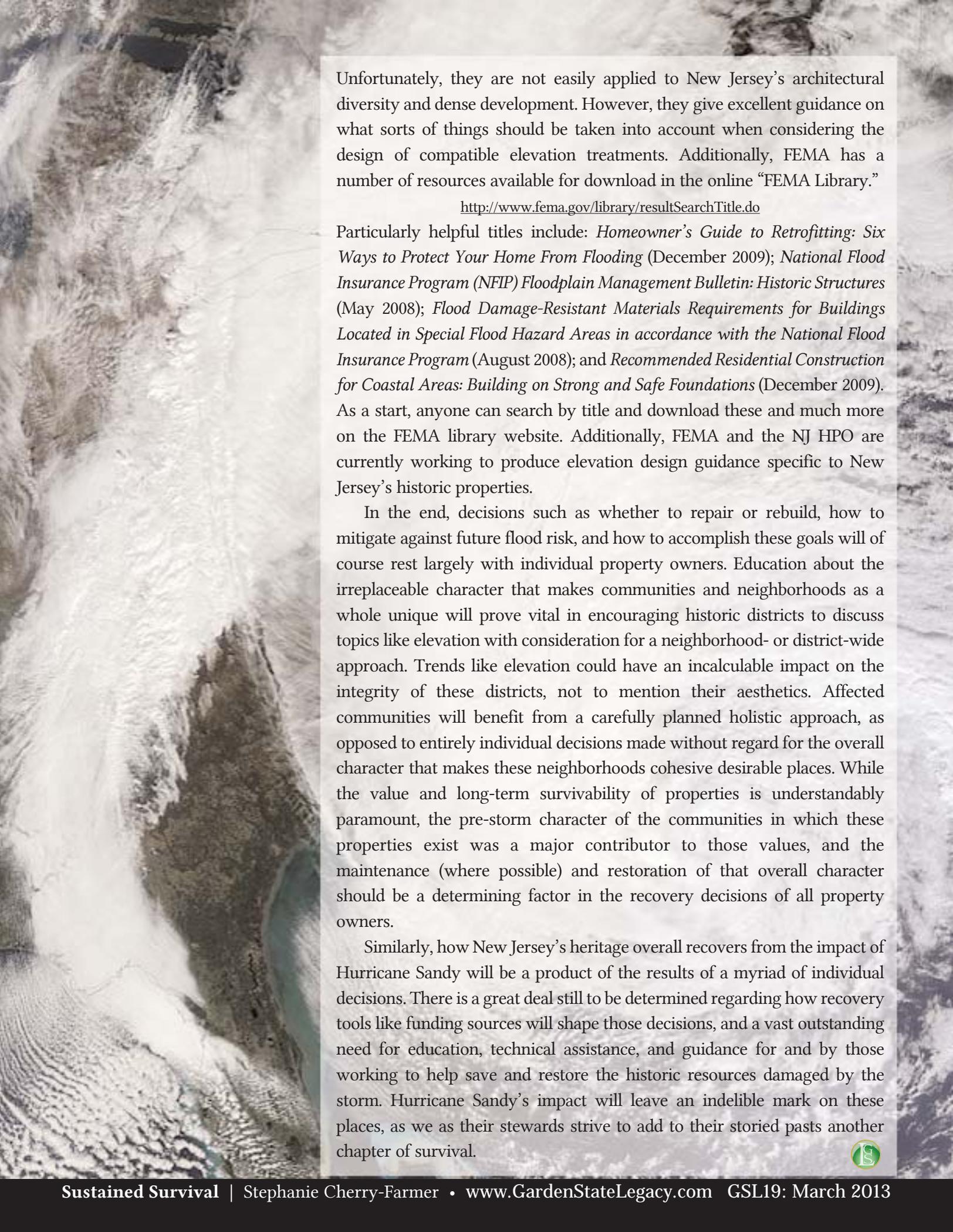
two historic districts defined as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in that community: the Mantoloking Historic District and the Mantoloking Marine Historic District. But the municipality has not benefited from a comprehensive historic resources survey since the 1980s. With limited available data about Mantoloking’s heritage pre-Sandy, getting an accurate read on the significance and integrity of what was lost is impossible, and factoring what we do know into recovery efforts will be extremely challenging.

Within damaged historic districts, there are big concerns about how “recovery” will actually materialize. The need to educate property owners about the benefits of repair over replacement, and options for preservation-conscious restoration, are massive. Funding such as the \$50 million that has been appropriated from the Historic Preservation Fund will only be applicable to work that meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties- the National Park Service’s basic guidelines for the appropriate repair, rehabilitation, and restoration of historic resources. This is encouraging news for the future integrity of storm-damaged historic districts, in that it means that owners have an incentive to repair historic properties appropriately, but these owners need education as to what “appropriately” means, and how to accomplish it, particularly in the midst of so many other “recovery” priorities.

Then there’s the hottest topic on the current built environment radar: property elevation. New rules governing eligibility for the National Flood Insurance Program will allow communities to mandate that new construction in flood zones be elevated above Advisory Base Flood Elevation levels. Existing buildings that meet the “substantial damage requirement,” meaning that they were damaged over 50 percent, will also have to adhere to the elevation requirements for new construction in order to secure the necessary permits to rebuild. Remarkably, there are exceptions for historic properties- many municipalities have within their municipal floodplain ordinances variances for National or State Register-listed or eligible and locally-designated properties, and FEMA offers substantial guidance on wet floodproofing and other flood damage mitigation construction measures (see next paragraph). But laudable concerns about the long-term sustainability of non-elevated properties in proven flood zones remain. What is the best approach for preserving existing integrity when that integrity does not accommodate new environmental realities such as sea level rise?

There are helpful resources available for property owners and communities grappling with this question. The *Mississippi Elevation Design Guidelines*, which were drafted after Hurricane Katrina, are the so-called “Gold Standard” model for elevation concerns.

<http://www.msdisasterrecovery.com/documents/MDA%20EDG%20Final%20110308.pdf>



Unfortunately, they are not easily applied to New Jersey's architectural diversity and dense development. However, they give excellent guidance on what sorts of things should be taken into account when considering the design of compatible elevation treatments. Additionally, FEMA has a number of resources available for download in the online "FEMA Library."

<http://www.fema.gov/library/resultSearchTitle.do>

Particularly helpful titles include: *Homeowner's Guide to Retrofitting: Six Ways to Protect Your Home From Flooding* (December 2009); *National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Floodplain Management Bulletin: Historic Structures* (May 2008); *Flood Damage-Resistant Materials Requirements for Buildings Located in Special Flood Hazard Areas in accordance with the National Flood Insurance Program* (August 2008); and *Recommended Residential Construction for Coastal Areas: Building on Strong and Safe Foundations* (December 2009). As a start, anyone can search by title and download these and much more on the FEMA library website. Additionally, FEMA and the NJ HPO are currently working to produce elevation design guidance specific to New Jersey's historic properties.

In the end, decisions such as whether to repair or rebuild, how to mitigate against future flood risk, and how to accomplish these goals will of course rest largely with individual property owners. Education about the irreplaceable character that makes communities and neighborhoods as a whole unique will prove vital in encouraging historic districts to discuss topics like elevation with consideration for a neighborhood- or district-wide approach. Trends like elevation could have an incalculable impact on the integrity of these districts, not to mention their aesthetics. Affected communities will benefit from a carefully planned holistic approach, as opposed to entirely individual decisions made without regard for the overall character that makes these neighborhoods cohesive desirable places. While the value and long-term survivability of properties is understandably paramount, the pre-storm character of the communities in which these properties exist was a major contributor to those values, and the maintenance (where possible) and restoration of that overall character should be a determining factor in the recovery decisions of all property owners.

Similarly, how New Jersey's heritage overall recovers from the impact of Hurricane Sandy will be a product of the results of a myriad of individual decisions. There is a great deal still to be determined regarding how recovery tools like funding sources will shape those decisions, and a vast outstanding need for education, technical assistance, and guidance for and by those working to help save and restore the historic resources damaged by the storm. Hurricane Sandy's impact will leave an indelible mark on these places, as we as their stewards strive to add to their storied pasts another chapter of survival.

