



FEMA

Flood Risk Review Meeting Minutes Summers County, West Virginia

February 17, 2022
12:00pm

Webinar

Welcome, Introductions, and Opening Remarks

Presenters for the meeting included:

- Amanuel Ghebreegzabher, *Project Officer, FEMA Region 3*
- Brandon Cramer, *GIS Project Manager, Wood Group, Inc.*
- Alexandria Hunt, *Data Development Engineer, Wood Group, Inc.*
- Charles Grishaber, *State NFIP Coordinator, West Virginia*
- Kurt Donaldson, *West Virginia University Tech Center, Senior Project Manager*

Agenda Overview

- Welcome and Introductions
- Where We Are – Draft Maps
- Flood Study Update
- Study Impacts
- Using Flood Risk Data to Reduce Flood Risk
- Discussion

There was a total of 16 Attendees, 6 of whom were community or state representatives.

Contacts

FEMA Region III

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Presentation

See the presentation for the slides that align with the notes throughout this section.

Meeting Purpose, Timeline for where Summers County is at in the process.

- Examine new study areas, discuss how the analysis and mapping have changed since previous study, work collaboratively to ensure that the needs of the community and its partners are met, and to present timeline of next steps.
- The FRR meeting gives local officials the opportunity to review and discuss the draft study data with representatives from FEMA and the State of West Virginia.
- Currently at Draft Floodplain - February 17, 2022, Preliminary Maps and CCO Meeting – Fall 2022, Appeal Period – Spring 2023, End of Appeal Period – 90 days after appeal start, FEMA issues LFD – Winter 2023, Effective Date – Spring 2024
- Communities can review the draft study data and submit any concerns or comments to FEMA up to 30 days from the date of the FRR meeting.

Flood Study Update

- The current effective FIRMs use a black and white imagery background with the 100-year flood event in a blue spotted color, floodway is the same color but has white hatching, and the 500-year event is a black spotted color. The updated FIRMs will be in full color aerial imagery with the 100-year event in solid blue, floodway with alternating blue and red hatching, and 500-year event in orange.
- Except for the New River PMR area, the entire county has been updated to reflect new data down to the 2 square mile drainage area. 162 miles of stream were studied using approximate Zone A methods, and 77 miles of stream were studied using detailed Zone AE methods.
- LiDAR data from 2016 along with survey data from 2020 on 23 structures were used to help develop the new floodplains.
- The updated draft floodplain in some areas will be wider than the effective floodplains in some areas while in other areas it will contract. Certain properties will be added to the special flood hazard area while others will be removed from it.
- FEMA will provide communities with Flood Risk Dashboards that show how the draft floodplains will impact them.

Overview of Flood Risk Products & Datasets

- Non-regulatory Flood Risk Products (FRPs) can help inform flood mitigation decisions.
- There are 3 types of flood risk products:
 - Changes since last FIRM: Will show where the updated draft floodplains have expanded or contracted compared to the effective floodplain.
 - Flood Depth Grids: Subtracts the water surface elevation from the ground elevation and will provide the depth of flooding.
 - Water Surface Grids: Raster with pixels that will provide a water surface elevation at any location in the floodplain.
- FRPs are helpful for managing development and for hazard mitigation planning. Since hazard mitigation planning is cyclical, FRPs can help identify hazards even after a new hazard mitigation plan is completed. Hazard identification should be used to inform decision-making as Summers County moves forward with mitigation and development projects.



Project Timeline

- Flood Risk Review Meeting – February 17, 2022, Preliminary Maps and CCO Meeting – Fall 2022, Appeal Period – Spring 2023, End of Appeal Period – 90 days after appeal period start date, FEMA issues LFD – Winter 2023, Effective Date – 6 months after LFD.

Discussion

- Following the FRR meeting, there will be a 30-day comment period for county and community officials to submit comments on the draft floodplain data. After the county and communities have reviewed the materials provided, FEMA and its mapping partners can be reached to answer any questions about the study.
- It is important to bring up comments during this period because it is easier to get things worked out now versus during the appeal period.
- Comments can be sent in via email or phone and each comment will receive a formal reply from FEMA or its mapping partner.
- An optional way to send locational information with comments is by using the West Virginia Flood Tool and selecting the “share link” button.

Questions/Comments

Q: If structures complied with FEMA regulations before the new draft data, are they grandfathered in on the insurance?

A: No, grandfathering will not be an option. Moving forward, flood insurance rates will be based off the new Risk Rating 2.0 system, which will be discussed in greater detail in the upcoming CCO meeting. If there are any questions or concerns about this topic, please contact one of FEMA’s subject matter experts listed below for more information.

Elizabeth (Betsy) Ranson, Mitigation Planning Specialist: Elizabeth.Ranson@fema.dhs.gov

Richard Sabota, Insurance Program Specialist: Richard.Sabota@fema.dhs.gov

Q: Does anything community representatives observe and comment on need to be backed by some type of engineering evidence?

A: Technical data is always the optimal way to support a comment or justification for revised mapping. There have been instances where comments and observations are shared without technical data and the engineering or mapping team can review that area in greater detail and determine whether modifications to the flood modeling and mapping are warranted. It can be helpful to draw attention to an area of development or potential contentiousness because the engineering and mapping team can review the flood modeling and mapping in it before the release of the preliminary products.

Q: Why do we study areas where nobody lives, such as in the national forest area on the New River upstream of Bluestone Dam?

A: This area has a static water surface elevation and as a result, the cost of mapping the floodplain in it was minimal. Also, the backwater effects of this area impacts more populated areas on tributaries of the New River.