



FEMA

Community Coordination & Outreach Meeting Notes Berkeley County, WV

October 2, 2025
12:00 pm – 1:30 pm ET

Virtual Meeting

Welcome and Introductions

- Introductions were made for all meeting participants, including the presenters:
 - Elizabeth Ranson, Floodplain Management Specialist
 - Kevin Sneed, CTP Project Officer
 - Kurt Donaldson, West Virginia GIS Tech Center
 - Sarah K. Bowen, Mapping Partner
- Agenda Overview
 - Welcome & Introductions
 - Where We Are – Preliminary Maps
 - Impacts
 - Floodplain Management
 - Public Outreach
 - What Should You Do
 - Questions and Discussion
- The meeting was attended by 6 representatives from Berkeley County and 12 State and Federal partners (including Study Contractors). Please refer to the attendee list at the end of this document.

Presentation

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

Where We Are - Preliminary Maps

- Timeline for Berkeley County:
 - Current Effective Maps (Digital Conversion) – July 2009
 - Advisory Flood Height Modeling/Mapping – ~2012
 - Kick-Off Meeting – November 2021
 - Risk MAP Study Notification – October 2021 and January 2023
 - Flood Risk Review (FRR) Meeting – April 4, 2025
 - Preliminary FIRMs – August 29, 2025
 - Community Coordination and Outreach (CCO) Meeting – October 2, 2025
 - Appeal Period Start – Late 2025/Early 2026
 - End of Appeal Period – 90 days after Appeal start
 - Letter of Final Determination – Summer 2026 (followed by Effective Date after 6 months)

- Format of the Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) and associated report/database is updated – where 1% flood elevations are published with modeled cross-sections and additional cross-sections, hydrologic calculations, and additional data layers are accessible in the geodatabase.
- Preliminary products and current effective flood maps and Flood Risk Products (FRP) are available on FEMA’s Mapping Service Center (MSC) at www.msc.fema.gov. MSC provides FIRM backup data and information as well as historic mapping products.
- Digital flood hazard data can be viewed and downloaded from the National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL) – effective and preliminary products as well as the **FEMA R3 “Changes Since Last FIRM” (CSLF) Viewer**: <https://arcg.is/0zbTDm> for visual depiction for areas of change (note: online maps have various scale dependencies and displayed information will change as zoomed in).
- Digital flood hazard data may also be viewed on the **West Virginia Flood Tool** – [WV Flood Tool \(mapwv.gov\)](http://mapwv.gov).

Impacts

- Previously issued Letters of Map Change (LOMCs) are evaluated in relation to the revised Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). Categorization for the previous determinations (e.g., to be revalidated or to be superseded) are presented on the Preliminary Summary of Map Actions (SOMAs) which is sent with the Preliminary FIRMs. A copy of the Final SOMA will be sent in conjunction with the subsequent Letter of Final Determination, and all applicable LOMCs that qualify for revalidation will be listed on a single Revalidation Letter that is sent to the community (and posted on the FEMA Map Service Center) shortly before the new effective date. Communities are recommended to review the list of previously issued LOMCs and how those determinations are impacted by the new mapping effort.
- The Countywide Dashboard for Berkeley County was reviewed and includes information about the flood risk to people and structures as well as flood insurance policy and claim information. Information shared included:
 - Compared to the effective FIRMs, widening and narrowing of draft 1%-annual-chance floodplain (SFHA) extents were observed throughout the county.
 - SFHA increases: Opequon Creek, Dry Run, and Evans Run
 - SFHA decreases: Rocky Marsh Run, Middle Creek, and Potomac River Tributary 3
 - Extended study reaches (with drainage areas of 1 square miles and greater, and not on current effective FIRMs) result in new properties within the SFHA.
 - There are more buildings expected to be mapped into the SFHA (+228) than mapped out (-172).
 - Refined building counts inventory only primary structures, excluding outbuildings; this data was obtained from the West Virginia GIS Tech Center.
 - Dashboard figures as based on the nationally available building layer and may be different from local building data that is more recent or accurate.
- The history of flooding in Berkeley County was discussed, showing that the county has experienced 12 flood-related presidential disaster declarations since 1953. The average NFIP Claims payment is \$66,000 and the average FEMA Disaster Assistance Grant is \$3,000, making insurance an important tool for recovery after a flood.

Floodplain Management

- Communities can regulate to higher standards (such as regulating to the 0.2% annual chance flood or a buffer of the SFHA). Higher standards can contribute to greater resiliency as well as incremental premium discounts for communities that participate in the Community Rating System.
- The local communities must adopt compliant floodplain ordinances and have them approved prior to the effective date of the new maps. Communities can be suspended from the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) if the compliant floodplain ordinances have not been adopted prior to the effective maps being issued. Communities should not only factor in time for local procedural requirements, but also time for state review before being forwarded to FEMA.
- Communities are recommended to initiate ordinance review/update prior to the Letter of Final Determination (LFD), particularly in the context of higher standards, but must wait for the LFD to formally adopt.
- See Planning Recommendations Slide 33 for recommendations on planning ordinance adoption.

Public Outreach

- Community outreach following the release of preliminary products is an important phase of a Risk MAP project, and can be accomplished through a variety of outreach activities at the community's discretion, including an in-person or virtual Public Open House meeting, community newsletters, social media posts, mailings, door hangers, etc.
- FEMA provides a variety of resources to assist locally directed outreach efforts, including a "Local Officials Toolkit" (PDF attached with meeting materials, [FEMA Flood Risk Communication Video Series](#), [FEMA Flood Risk Communication Toolkit for Community Officials](#), and various brochures.
- Property owners are advised to contact their insurance agents, call the FMIX at 1-877-336-2627 or visit <http://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program> and floodsmart.gov for additional information.

What Should You Do?

- Community Action Items:
 - Review Preliminary Maps, FIS, and the Summary of Map Actions (SOMA).
 - Comment on Preliminary information.
 - Appeal Preliminary Maps if desired.
 - Reach out to community members.
 - Wait for the LFD before adopting a floodplain management ordinance.
- FEMA will initiate a statutory 90-day appeal period, including a proposed notice in the Federal Register, 2 legal classified ads in a local newspaper of record, and a supplemental press release to other media outlets that communities identify.
- The Appeal Period is anticipated for Late 2025/Early 2026.
- FEMA will send a detailed letter to community officials (chief executive and floodplain administrator) shortly before the legal classified notices in the local newspaper.
- Appeals must be submitted by community officials during the 90-day appeal period (on behalf of the community and/or private property owners) and must include scientific or technical data that demonstrates a revision to the preliminary information would be warranted.

Points of contact:

FEMA Region 3	
Ammanuel Ghebreegzabher Project Officer (202) 718-2759 amanuel.ghebreegzabher@fema.dhs.gov	Elizabeth Ranson Floodplain Management Specialist (215) 347-0686 elizabeth.ranson@fema.dhs.gov
Bill Bradfield Insurance Specialist (202) 880-5906 william.b.bradfield@fema.dhs.gov	
Mapping Partner	
Brandon Cramer Study Manager (703) 488-3772 brandon.cramer@wsp.com	
State NFIP Office	
Julia Sears State NFIP Coordinator (304) 414-7654 Julia.r.sears@wv.gov	Kevin Sneed CTP Project Officer (304) 957-2571 kevin.l.sneed@wv.gov

Questions/Comments

There were no questions raised during this meeting.

Attendee List

Community/Agency	First Name	Last Name	Title	Attended
Berkeley County	Laura	Hoffmaster	Deputy Planning Director (FPA)	Yes
Martinsburg, City of	Kimberly	Petrucci	City Engineer/Planning Director (FPA)	Yes
Martinsburg, City of	Jared	Tomlin	Stormwater Manager	Yes
Martinsburg, City of	Rebecca	Russel	Stormwater Coordinator	Yes
Martinsburg, City of	Austin	Dotson	GIS Analyst	Yes
FEMA	Elizabeth	Ranson	FM&I Specialist	Yes
FEMA	Frank	Shockey	RAB Branch Chief	Yes
FEMA	Amanuel	Ghebreegziabher	Project Officer	Yes
FEMA	Aaron	Harding	NFIP Compliance Specialist	Yes
FEMA	Jamie	Carpenter	FM&I Branch Chief	Yes
FEMA	John	McCandless	FM&I Specialist	Yes
State (WVEM)	Julia	Sears	State NFIP Coordinator	Yes
State (WVEM)	Kevin	Sneed	CTP Project Officer	Yes
State (WV GISTC)	Kurt	Donaldson	Senior Project Manager	Yes
State (WV GISTC)	Shannon	Maynard	GIS	Yes
PTS (ARC)	Sarah	Bowen	Mapping Partner	Yes
PTS (ARC)	Brandon	Cramer	Mapping Partner	Yes
PTS (ARC)	Kara	Caricato-Michalke	Mapping Partner	Yes