

NEWS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

New floodplain maps coming for parts of Kent and Sussex counties

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control is working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to produce new flood risk maps for portions of Kent and Sussex counties. Approximately 70 miles of stream in Sussex County and seven miles of stream in Kent County are being restudied.

In Sussex County, the streams being studied are within the Nanticoke and Iron Branch watersheds. In Kent County, portions of the Tidbury Creek Watershed have been restudied.

On Dec. 30, 2010, FEMA issued preliminary floodplain maps for these streams. This begins a public review process, and an opportunity for local officials to comment on the draft maps. These floodplain maps are used by code enforcement officials to regulate development in the floodplain, and by banks and insurance companies to determine the need for and the price of flood insurance.

“The most significant benefit of these new maps will be more accurate floodplain delineation. Based on new hydrologic analyses, the maps identify specific flood levels, providing detailed views of the 1 percent annual chance flood elevation – more commonly known as the 100-year flood level. This is the flood level a waterway can reach under extreme flooding conditions,” said DNREC Environmental Scientist Mike Powell. Past maps in these areas were less accurate and did not identify levels of predicted flooding, Powell added.

The flood study for central and western Sussex County is complete and draft maps are available for the public to review. A copy of these preliminary maps and the accompanying Flood Insurance Study are available online at <http://www.rampp-team.com/de.htm>.

If you have any questions about these preliminary floodplain maps or studies, please contact Mike Powell, Shoreline and Waterway Management Section, at 302-739-9921, or email michael.powell@state.de.us.